THE CURRYS OF COPLEY SQUARE

by

Lenice Ingram Bacon

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FOREWORD

On November 17, 1965 my husband and I attended the impressive installation of Dr. John Stuart Hafer as the new President of Curry College, and we were convinced that under his guidance the College had a splendid future.

This feeling of enthusiasm carried over to a day not long after when I was the guest of a group of loyal present-day Curry supporters, functioning under the name, "Friends of Curry."

I soon realized however, that I was the "old-timer" indeed. And that although they were proud to bear the name of Curry, actually very little was known about the early beginnings of the School of Expression ~~which~~ from which Curry College stems. As a result, I was asked to act as "Historian," a formidable enough title to be sure, but my answer in the affirmative was as spontaneous as the question had been. I said I would be glad to tell them anything I might know about Dr. and Mrs. Curry, the Founders, and also that it might be interesting to gather material relative to the early school from other "old grads." It was as simple as that!

I had no conception of the enormity of the project I was undertaking. Due to the difficult period through which the School passed after the deaths of Dr. and Mrs. Curry, (also the School had undergone two major moves) the records were far from organized. We "Old grads" who had survived, seemed to be scattered to the four winds, whereabouts mostly "unknown."

But through much digging into old scrapbooks and pouring over out-of-date alumni lists, hundreds of letters have gone out to "Dear former Curryites," urging them to respond, giving personal sketches of

themselves and their activities and to tell how they happened to be drawn to the School, their impressions of Dr. and Mrs. Curry, the teachers or, of the School itself; Also of any experiences amusing, inspirational or otherwise, that they might recall.

The list was certainly not a "picked list." If you failed to receive an appeal, it was because we did not know how to reach you.

We are grateful to those who have responded with letters containing much interesting material, and these letters will be placed in an appropriate portfolio and filed in the Archives of Curry College under "They Knew the Currys."

The warm response goes to prove what Dr. Curry used to say "The School of Expression is neither here nor there, but in the hearts and minds of those who go out from it"--and so it lives!

Long live Curry!

Lenice Ingram Bacon

Foreword for Lenice Bacon's Book

Much to my regret I never met Dr. Samuel S. Curry face to face. He had died a year before I invaded the Boston community in 1924 to undertake my duties in the Department of Geology in Harvard University. A year or so later, one of my former students in Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, the Reverend Mr. Alan Blacklock, induced me to take an interest in the "School of Expression" that Dr. and Mrs. Curry had been operating. Alan was one of the many fine young men (and there have been many fine young women, too) with whom I have had academic contacts during the half-century and more of my professorial career. At that time he was the minister of a Presbyterian Church in Waltham, one of Boston's industrial and residential suburbs, and was the treasurer of the School in which he had studied under Dr. and Mrs. Curry after his graduation from Queens.

Alan soon persuaded me to become a trustee of the School of Expression (later to become Curry College). a responsibility that I maintained from 1926 to 1968, when I was permitted to retire as an "Honorary Member of the Board". His task of persuasion was not a difficult one. As an undergraduate in the Ohio college known as Denison University, back in 1907 to 1909, I had been somewhat active in amateur dramatics and public speaking and had learned a bit about the "Curry Method". That "method" stressed among other things the principle that gestures should be spontaneous, coming from "the inside", rather than the stilted

exercises imposed from "the outside" by many of the teachers of "elocution" of that time. It encouraged each student to perfect his own natural style of expression and to avoid the artificialities of attempting to imitate the style of others, no matter how celebrated they might be. And I was all for it! Moreover, throughout the years I counselled many a "teaching fellow" assisting me with the instruction of my undergraduate classes and many a graduate student preparing a presentation to a scientific organization to be just as careful about the way he expressed himself as about the data and ideas he wanted his audience to hear. "It doesn't matter how much you know," I used to say to them; "if you can't or don't communicate that knowledge to others effectively, you will never get very far in your profession. When speaking to any audience, enunciate every word clearly. Don't mumble; never let your voice die away at the end of a sentence. When using pictures or diagrams, always talk to your audience, never to the lantern screen, the blackboard, or the chart." (I am still surprised by the number of public-speakers, even among college graduates, who need that simple advice.) I am sure that Dr. Curry would have said "amen" to that. It was only natural that I should join his team.

Times were hard for the School of Expression in the late nineteen-twenties and early nineteen-thirties. Dr. and Mrs. Curry were gone. Many of the luminaries in the intellectual and social circles of what was justifiably known as "the Athens

of America" during Dr. Curry's lifetime, who had rallied 'round him and his wife as they launched their enterprise, had died; others had drifted away. There was no endowment (not until many years later did a small residual legacy from Dr. Curry's estate finally accrue to Curry College), no shelter beneath the umbrella of a firmly established academic body. The severe financial depression affected everyone and every institution. The School's quarters on the third floor of an ancient office building facing Copley Square were uninspiring, to put it mildly. Looking back, it is a wonder that it survived. That it did survive was due to the unselfish devotion of some of Dr. Curry's former colleagues about whom Mrs. Bacon writes in her delightful and informative book. I think particularly of Dean Binny Gunnison and Miss André, outstanding teachers both, and Mrs. McQuarry, competent secretary, registrar, and general manager. Their devotion is itself a measure of the quality of the high idealism and inspiring leadership of the founders and long-time administrators of the School.

Two things were required to keep the School alive through the nineteen-thirties: move it from its stuffy outmoded quarters, soon to be demolished, to a more suitable domicile, and obtain from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts the authority to grant degrees to its graduates. Mrs. Bacon recounts the sequence of events in concise terms and I do not want to repeat the story

here. Suffice it to say that when the corporate name was changed to Curry College in 1943 there was no question in the minds of all concerned; the expanding college of liberal arts with its strong program in the science as well as the art of communication should bear the name of the founders of the School of Expression. Ahd today (1970), when Curry College occupies a campus of 115 acres in suburban Milton, with more than a dozen modern buildings, it continues to be the "lengthened shadow" of the inspired originaters of that School. Mrs. Bacon's book is a worthy tribute to them.

Kirtley F. Mather
Professor of Geology, Emeritus
Harvard University

15 May 1970

CHAPTER I
Background for Curry College

The gates of Curry swing wide in the exciting adventure of learning. Meeting the challenge of a rich heritage, its rapidly developing present is fraught with a future potential unlimited.

Its aim is to exemplify the finest in the private New England small liberal arts college tradition--a four-year coeducational, non-profit, non-denominational institution, its leaders dedicated to the task of preparing their 800 students (representing nearly half of the 50 states as well as several foreign countries) to take their place in a free society.

The corporate name of Curry College, in honor of the founders, Samuel Silas Curry and Anna (Baright) Curry, was adopted as recently as 1943. It is fitting indeed that the name should be perpetuated for the Curry background had long been one of high ideals in the field of education.

The College stems from the (Curry) School of Expression founded in 1879 and incorporated ~~in~~ on Oct 3 1886, and on the first governing Board of the School under the Public Statutes of Mass. Chapter 115 there appear names of famous leaders in many and varied fields of activity at the turn of the century. As we review them it reads much like a "who's Who" of Massachusetts of that period: William Dean Howells, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Edward Everett Hale, the Rt. Rev. Phillips Brooks, Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts; three ex-Governors of the State, the Hon. Oliver Ames, the Hon. Alexander H. Rice and the Hon. William Gaston. Alexander Melville Bell was also an associate founder of the School and his illustrious son,

Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, served as Chancellor of the School for a period of fifteen years.

Located in the heart of Copley Square, Boston, the School of Expression played an important part in the life of "the Square", the Currys themselves contributing much to its many cultural activities. Drawing their more than three hundred students (enrolled in 1915) from 47 different States, 6 Provinces of Canada and 2 foreign countries, the influence of this earlier institution was far-flung. The School held a national reputation not only as an outstanding school of Speech and Drama but its diversified training embraced literature, the arts, humanities and philosophy and its graduates were in demand as teachers all over the United States.

In 1932, after the passing of both Dr. and Mrs. Curry, the School of Expression moved from Copley Square farther into the Back Bay area of Boston, establishing a new residence in a commodious brownstone house at 251 Commonwealth Avenue, thus fulfilling Dr. Curry's dream of a permanent home for his School. It was in these surroundings that the School of Expression adopted the name of Curry College.

In May 7 1943

In 1952, another important move was made when the permanent home of Curry College became a lovely rolling, wooded tract of land in the beautiful and historic residential community of Milton, Massachusetts with a campus of more than 50 acres and well-equipped, modern buildings--a beautiful rural setting

*These momentous moves were made during the regime of Donald Wilson Miller, S.B., A.M., Ed.D., President of Curry College from 1941-63 and to Willard much credit goes Price Lombard, L.L.B., D.Sc.O., Boston lawyer who has served both Curry insitutions consecutively from 1916 to the present time. Dr. Lombard studied under both Dr. and Mrs. Curry becoming a member of the Board of Trustees of the School of Expression during their lifetime. Since then, he has continued as a Trustee playing an important role in establishing and molding the present Curry College. From 1943 to 1968 he served as Chairman of the Board and the Corporation of the College and is still an active member of both.

Bachelor of Art and Bachelor of Science.

The very environment of the College is conducive to achieving a valuable

* Early School Founders

relationship of faculty to students and students to each other--to a fuller communication in the class room, athletic activities, extra-curricular functions through individual counseling and daily contacts.

As we review Dr. Curry's principles of teaching of almont a century ago we are impressed with the fact that they are as applicable today as then. His definition of a "great teacher" was, "He must lose his own self and find it in other men...stimulate the ideas and conceptions of another soul."

Dr. Curry's writing also runs parallel with the aims and ideals of the present regime at Curry College. Dr. Curry wrote, "The aim and first step of all education is to awaken, to inspire...training should be of the personality as a whole, the coordination and unity in being enabling the educated man to convey, to communicate." And, in 1969, we read the words of Dr. John Stuart Hafer, President of Curry College, "Curry feels that the student must be helped to become a mature person, one who knows his goals, at all times aware of his responsibilities toward himself and toward others in order to communicate effectively."

So, although there have been two Curry institutions, the early (Curry) School of Expression and the present Curry College, differing so in nature that the gap might at first glance seem unbridgeable, yet idealistically and educationally we find a compatibility, a discernible continuity of thought and feeling.

This same compatibility is brought out in an article published in the November 1968 issue of the Speech Teacher* called The Curry Tradition written by Dr. Horace G. Rahskopf, Professor Emeritus of Speech at the University of Washington in Seattle and a past president of the Speech Association of America. Dr. Rahskopf says "Dr. Curry's viewpoint was psychological and artistic..seeking a wide humanistic method which would integrate all the powers and functions of the human being...not primarily

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*The Speech Teacher November 1968 Vol. XVII, No.4

an encoding and decoding machine." The article ends, "S. S. Curry, a significant representative of a day that is gone, has projected a tradition from his era which speaks significantly to our own (1969)."

CHAPTER II

From The Very Beginning to the Copley Square Period

Actually the Curry School had its beginnings at Boston University and within the walls of that great institution there ~~hangs~~ hung in Sept. 1956 a bronze plaque,* bearing a likeness of Dr. Curry, placed there in honor of "Samuel Silas Curry and his loyal wife and collaborator, Anna Baright Curry in recognition of their inspiration and devotion to the highest ideals...Accept thy dream and dare to obey it."

Boston University was the first university in the country to include Oratory as an established department, giving it an equal standing with that of literature, languages, philosophy and the sciences.** In the late 1870s great emphasis was placed upon the Spoken word along with a deep reverence for the written word, when educators took seriously Cicero's definition, "Oratory is a good man speaking well" and when the ability to express one's self well was considered an essential part of education.

Boston was especially proud that it held such distinction in the field of Speech so that it could be said "Elocution as an organized force in higher education had its beginning in Boston!"*** It boasted further that not only was Boston "the great literary center of the world, but the elocutionary center of the United States."****

Professor Lewis Baxter Monroe, Dean of the School of Oratory at Boston University, contributed much toward placing Boston at the head of

*The bas relief on the plaque was sculptured by Allison Macomber of Segregansett, Mass. from a portrait of Dr. Curry by Frank H. Tompkins.

**Werner's Magazine, April 1894 Vol.XVI No. 4 Edgar S. Werner, Owner and Editor No. 108 East 16th Street, New York.

***Ibid

****Ibid

the list. He was a far-sighted leader in the field of Speech whose methods of teaching were far deeper and more revolutionary than many of his contemporaries whose instruction had become superficial, stilted and unnatural.

Dr. William F. Warren, first President of Boston University,* in his annual report 1878-79, paid tribute to the new School of Oratory and to Professor Monroe's leadership, "No other institution in America has given so deep and beneficent impulse to the art and philosophy of expression."**

Both Samuel Silas Curry and Anna (Baright) Curry, co-founders of the Curry School of Expression, were an intimate part of that early School at Boston University. In fact, Miss Anna Baright's School of Elocution and Expression was a result of it, actually a continuation of it.

At the very opening of the School of Oratory*** in the fall of 1877, Miss Baright was asked to give a reading of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Rhyme of the Duchess May" which, according to all reports, she delivered with great aplomb, "the lyric possibilities of the poem combining with the most discriminating impersonations and the subtler thread of the story." Professor Monroe was so impressed with her "power on the platform" as well as her ability as a teacher, he made her his first assistant.****

Thus Miss Baright became associated with the very beginnings of the progressive movement in the arts of the spoken word. A summer session was planned for the summer of 1879 to be held at Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard, the first Summer School of Oratory ever held in the United States.

Tragedy however intervened. The beloved Professor Monroe became fatally ill and his untimely death left the Boston University School of Oratory in a sad state of loss and confusion, but it was Professor Monroe's request that his young assistant take over the Summer School and continue according to

*President from 1873 - 1903
**Boston As An Elocutionary Center by Fred Winslow Adams
Werner's Magazine Vol. XVI. No 4, April 1894. Published by
Edgar S. Werner, 108 East 16th Street, New York
***Early records of the School of Expression
**** Ibid

their original plans. His death occured on the opening day of the term and it was indeed a time of crisis. Indecision on the part of some, threatened to disband the whole venture. But Miss Baright with characteristic force met the challenge, inspiring confidence, carrying it on throughout the summer with great success.

Following the passing of Professor Monroe, the School of Oratory of Boston University was merged in the College of Liberal Arts and Miss Baright received many flattering offers, professional and otherwise. These included a proffer of marriage from Charles Wesley Emerson, the handsome, imposing elocutionist who in 1880 organized the Monroe Conservatory of Oratory, which in 1889 was called Emerson College of Oratory, which would become perhaps, ironically enough, the greatest rival of the Curry's School of Expression, and perhaps for this reason Mrs. Curry "had no use for it"

It was upon the advice of President Warren and others who were also aware of her ability, that Anna Baright made the decision to form her own School, patterning it upon Professor Monroe's policies and principles. When she had demurred on account of her age and inexperience, Dr. Warren had said, "If you do not, someone else will who is not as well entitled to do it as you."*

Thus, in October, 1879 Anna Baright opened her School of Elocution and Expression and the first printed circular** carries the announcement "With the avowed purpose of carrying out the grand and distinctive principle of the System of Lewis B. Monroe, A.M. as taught in the late Boston University School of Oratory, viz.: 'Expression is the outward manifestation of that which is already in the consciousness.'"

Miss Baright fell heir to the great teacher's desk and chairs*** and with this equipment added to her own innate ability, she set up her new venture in the old Congregational Building on Beacon Street in Boston.

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*From article on Anna Baright Curry of New York printed in Representative Women of New England.

**Curry College Archives The two year course included Physical Culture, Aesthetic Gymnastics, Vocal Training, Speaking, Articulation, Philosophy of Expression (Delsarte's), Lectures and Public Speaking, Artistic Reading, Bible and Hymn Reading and many other "Special and Comprehensive Cultural Courses."

***Early School of Expression records

of almost a century

So today after the passing of ninety years, as we Curryites lay claim to our date of founding, we must give credit to the courageous "slight 5 foot 4 young woman" with snapping brown eyes, fair of face, her mahogany-colored hair (long enough for her to sit upon) coiled high in the manner of the day upon her aristocratic head, Anna Baright. And all this before the day of the so-called "emancipation of woman!"

Graduating Cum Laude at the age of 23, she had been chosen by her class to give the address at the first Commencement Exercises of Boston University in the old Tremont Temple. She must have done justice to her subject, "Reading as a Fine Art" as she received a great ovation from her audience of 3000 people.

And in looking back, we salute Miss Baright who, had already won a name for herself as a Platform Reader, had been acclaimed by the VIPs at Boston University as "the best woman teacher of Elocution in the country,"* had established her own School, running it successfully for three years, before she ever gave her consent to marry young Samuel Silas Curry--and only then if he would give up being a Methodist minister!**

But the seeds of romance had been well planted by none other than Professor Monroe, Before his illness, Professor Monroe had sent to Miss Baright, his valued assistant, for private lessons in Voice, the Reverend S. S. Curry, a student at the School of Theology at Boston University.

Things developed rapidly. The young Reverend must have made most satisfactory progress for after Professor Monroe's passing, and the School of Oratory was merged in the College of Liberal Arts, "Professor S. S. Curry**

*Professor J.W. Churchill, often spoken of as "New England's finest Reader", [illegible] Mass. Instructor in

*While according to family lore, this prounouncement was made by Anna Baright and no doubt it must have carried weight for she was a very forceful young woman, but we do not know if that was the real reason for Samuel's giving up the ministry. His decision may have come later when his voice failed him and the fight to recover his loss of speech went on for some time. It was during this period that he sought out the best authorities both here and abroad and as result of his deep study of all phases of Speech there was developed the renowned "Curry Method". Instead of being a preacher he became a "teacher of preachers."

succeeded Professor Monroe in the Chair of Elocution and Oratory in Boston University."

The romance culminated in marriage May 31, 1882, Professor and Mrs. Curry carrying on in their respective careers, her School continuing to prosper under her supervision with the added counsel of her distinguished husband, who held the Snow Professorship of Oratory* connected with the Theological Department at Boston University. Many of his private pupils became a part of the student body at Mrs. Curry's School.

In 1888 however, Professor Curry felt it wise to resign his position at Boston University in order that he and his wife could devote their combined energies to their School which now became incorporated under the name of The School of Expression, Samuel Silas Curry and Anna Baright Curry, President and Dean respectively.

The coordination of the talents of Samuel Silas and Anna Baright Curry has been likened to that of "Pierre and Marie Sklodowska Curie--husband and wife -- masterminds who worked side by side in the scientific laboratory."**

Dr. David Wasgatt Clark added his tribute to the Curry team "the Currys relations and cooperation were as unique in Expression as that of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in Poetry".***

Certainly the Currys gifts complimented each other and their children have said "Father needed her gifts and Mother needed his."

In telling the Curry story it may seem at times that greater emphasis is placed upon the colorful figure of Dr. Curry making it appear that his was the more dominant personality of the two. But perhaps it only seemed more dominant as his role became more prominent in the position of President of the School. It could well have been that Anna Baright Curry, his brilliant

*Snow Professorship given by David Snow in 1885 still exists at Boston University, pays part of salary of Speech Professor,Dr. Curry was the first to hold it. Boston University records.

**In Memoriam Samuel Silas Curry Ph.D., Litt D. 1847-1921 by Nathan Haskell Dole, published in 1922 by the Expression Co. Boston.

***Zion's Herald N.E. Methodist Monthly 581 Boylston Street, Boston. Memorial Tribute He Acted Well His Part by David Wasgatt Clark D.D. Methodish Episcopal Bishop Jan. 11, 1922.

and clever young wife chose to subordinate (or appeared to subordinate) her personality to that of her genial husband who, with his out-going nature fitted so well into the lime light and who loved the glamorous role.

That was the usual position for good wives to assume in that era. As Anna Curry once said, "It's a man's world," and so she saw fit to make her husband President of her School.

In the meantime Mrs. Curry's early School had long since moved, first to 15 Freeman Place, then later, as the School of Expression it was located in the Y.M.C.A. Building, Boylston and Berkeley Streets.

It was in 1898 during that period of the development of Copley Square, where so many institutions of a cultural nature were migrating to "the Square," now being called "the new heart of the city," the Curry School of Expression established its home in the S. S. Pierce building, a large brownstone Germanic type building, the Curry studios and Curry Expression Publishing Co. occupying certain floors of the building throughout the lifetime of Dr. and Mrs. Curry.

It was in these congenial surroundings that the Curry School flourished, surrounded by the best of a cultural nature in the great city of Boston, and in turn, the Currys and their School made an enriching contribution to the life of "the Square."

To quote from an article which appeared in a publication of the period, May 1909, entitled A Unique Institution, "In Copley Square there stand three buildings, lofty, imposing, inspiring--the influence of each so far reaching that it cannot be measured by any human standard--Trintiy Church, the Public Library and the School of Expression in the Pierce Building.* It may seem declamatory to mention a school carried on in rented studios with institutions having magnificent buildings, and the architecture of which is a glory to our city, but those who know this unpretentious School of the Arts of the Spoken Word, know that it is exercising an influence--a vital influence for good throughout the length and breadth of the land."

*Waverly Magazine, May 1909 Waverly Magazine Co., 15 Beacon Street, Boston

CHAPTER III

THE SQUARE

The wit who said "Boston is not a city but a state of mind" could well have been describing the section, Copley Square. Purchased in 1883 by the city and named for Boston's own great painter John Singleton Copley, it was destined to become "by the mid-eighties the major intellectual as well as religious center of Boston..a new heart of the city created from what had been a stinking eyesore"* -- a part of the "New Boston" of a century or more ago.

Early in the nineteenth century, Bostonians were dreaming their perennial dream of a "New Boston" and in characteristic fashion had set out to do something about it. By the middle 1800s, far--seeing engineers and astute businessmen were well on their way changing the face of the earth, making their "impossible dream" come true through the transforming of the great Back Bay area into usuable and salable land. The travail was a mighty one, the convolutions of dredging, draining and filling lasting through many years.

Looking upon their man-made land, they saw that it was good. They could justly take pride in the success of their experiments--for instance, the beauty of the Public Gardens which they had brought into being. Spurred on by the highly profitable sale of hitherto worthless land the project of developing the Back Bay continued, with Copley Square becoming more and more the recognized "new Heart of the City."**

*Walter Muir Whitehill Boston A Topographical History, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1959

**Ibid

The evolution of the Square was not an aesthetic one. Like the rest of the Bay, dependent upon tides, it had been at times an unsightly and unsanitary mud-flat. As late as 1871 the triangular plot bought by the Episcopal parish of the South End upon which beautiful Trinity Church was to be built was described by Bishop William Lawrence as a "desert of dirt, dust, mud and wind."*

With the migration, however, of a number of the city's important churches and other famous institutions from "Old Boston" to the new site, the Square somehow "stumbled into shape** without the careful planning which had been employed in the development of other parts of the Back Bay, surprisingly enough the result was "one of the most interesting and attractive Squares in America...a successful blending of six different types of architecture..a rare jewel on the variegated tapestry which is Boston,"***.. "resembling a bit of Old Florence."****

The Square (not a square at all) holds loosely within its triangular boundaries, two great churches. Trinity Church, consecrated in February 1877, impressive in its French Romanesque stone masses, delightful in the grace of its colonnaded cloister. Diagonally across and equally impressive, stands the Italian Gothic "New Old South Church with its striking campanile, its tower of vari-colored stones, rich mullioned windows (having left far behind the simplicity of its ancestral home, the Old South Meeting House in downtown Boston).

On the west side of the triangle and facing trinity, the vast Boston Public Library dominates, fitting handsomely into the whole scene, a Florentine Renaissance masterpiece, while on the southern side there loomed (up until 1909) the large gabled brick building which housed the Museum of

*Walter Muir Whitehill Boston A Topographical History
**Ibid
***George F. Weston Jr. Boston Ways: High, By and Folk, Beacon Press, Beacon Hill, Boston
****The Book of Boston The Victorian Period by Marjorie Drake Ross Hastings House Publishers, New York, 1964

Fine Arts. This was replaced by the present Sheraton Plaza Hotel built along classical lines of architecture.

Today, one long-to-be-remembered landmark is missing from the Square--the large, five-storied brownstone building owned by S. S. Pierce Company, dealers for generations in fine edibles, where, occupying the second floor was the home of the (Curry) School of Expression, Dr. Samuel Silas Curry and Anna (Baright) Curry, President and Dean of the School, respectively.

The dignified Germanic edifice blended well, in fact gave a sense of balance to the Square, tucked in (that is, if such a massive structure could be said to be "tucked in") between the Library and the Sheraton Plaza (formerly the Art Museum). The Pierce Building fell early (1958) in the path of the "Urban Renewal" demolition squads, making way for the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike, and its absence leaves a yawning gap* which now serves to swallow up the continuous flow of traffic as it leaves Copley square by way of the Turnpike, the automobile relentlessly "changing the face of the earth."

The demise of the Pierce Building was but the beginning of other major upheavals within the Square. For what was once "new" is now "old Boston" and scheduled for redevelopment to fulfill further the dreams of the New Boston of the nineteen sixties and seventies.

Looking at the Square today amid the great mounds of dirt and rubble, awed by the confusion of modern machinery, many who have loved the Square are distrubed and snxious. Perhaps no institution is more affected by the changes that are to take place than historic Trinity Church around which much of the present reconstruction revolves. It is comforting indeed to hear the present Rector of the great church, the Rev. Theodore P. Ferris state, "Whether you like it or whether you don't..let me remind you that the

* Walter Muir Whitehill in his Boston A Topographical History Second Edition 1968, says it gives the "look as if the entire square were washing away into a vast hold in the ground."

the purpose is to make something beautiful...for no ulterior reason than to make the city more beautiful. Whether it does or not is yet to be seen; but that is the intention of it."*

So it is the hope of every lover of Boston that when the Square is put to rights once again, the brick mall completed with the parks finished to perfection, the last shrub set in place, Copley Square will remain "a rare jewel on the tapestry of Boston" more intriguing than ever before.

*Dr. Ferris has been in touch, from the beginning, and taken part in the consultations and discussions with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Commissioner of Public Parks and all those in authority. The above statement is quoted from his sermon preached at Trinity Church, Boston, October 20, 1968 entitled A Change in Copley Square.

CHAPTER IV

Dr. Curry of Copley Square

It was natural and fitting that "the rare jewel," Copley Square, should become a favorite rendezvous for those intellectuals who were carrying on the traditions, humor and culture of that "older brotherhood"* who in their day had dominated the Boston scene--Holmes, Lowell, Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne--those who had met so perfectly that challenge of leadership as set forth in certain remarks of no lesser an authority than Mr. Emerson, "the sage of Concord," "This town of Boston is not an accident.. I speak with the language of coldest history when I say that Boston commands attention as the town which was appointed in the destiny of the nations to lead the civilization of North America."

With the passing of the old century and the dawning of the twentieth, the "newer brotherhood" of Boston leaders were finding "the new heart of the city" a stimulating and congenial area for their varied activities. Literary lights such as William Dean Howells of Atlantic Monthly fame, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Edward H. Clement of the Old Boston Transcript, Dr. Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard College: "Unitarian Prophets" of the stature of Clarke, Ames, Frothingham, Hereford, Dole, Norton; and the two great ministers whose two great churches stood within the Square, Phillips Brooks, Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts and rector of Trinity Church and George A Gordon, beloved pastor of New Old South church, "The most

* M. A. DeWolfe Howe Boston The Place and the People

and George A. Gordon, beloved pastor of New Old South Church, "The most important Congregational Church in Boston".* And, walking tall with these "giants of men" was one Samuel Silas Curry, idealist, philosopher, connoisseur of Art, specialist in the field of communications and human relations far beyond his time, prophet of the Spoken Word, President and Co-founder of the (Curry) School of Expression located within the heart of the Square.

Whether Boston was a "state of mind" or the place "appointed by history to lead the civilization of North America"..whatever it was...S. S. Curry, a Methodist minister, imported from Tennessee, fitted into the rarefied atmosphere, "taking to it like a duck to water"**

In response, "Boston took to him. The warm, inspiring quality of the man with his social gifts, caught the imagination of Boston...he was accepted and honored in the circles of art and literature...at home with the literati."***

S. S. Curry became a legend in his own time. Few, if any, who came in contact with him could forget the tall, lean, eager, serious, laughing, many-sided man with his flowing beard and great shock of white hair.

Again quoting Dr. James P. Berkley who studied speech under him at the Newton Theological Seminary, "Dr. Curry was a handsome impressive man of the Victorian era, barbered and dressed in the mode of that elegant period, his pince-nez glasses often falling off his nose in the intenseness of his speaking."

Dr. Curry's son, Haskell,**** however, took a younger man's viewpoint in the matter of dress (his father having been fifty three years of age when

*Professor James P. Berkley now of Framingham, Mass., formerly a pupil of Dr. Curry's at Newton Theological Seminary in 1901, later Professor of Old and New Testament at the Seminary. Memorial to Dr. Curry.

**Dr. Samuel M. Lindsay letters 1966

***Today's Speech Vol VII No. 4, article by Haskell S. Curry, published by the Speech Association of the Eastern States, Nov. 1959, Penn. State University, University Park, Penn.

for convention. He insisted on wearing a wing collar two or three sizes too big, a big loose necktie with a stickpin through the center of the knot and a Prince Albert coat, even after such a costume had begun to look a little odd."

Regardless of his "odd" mode of dressing Dr. Curry was distinguished and striking in bearing, a colorful figure in his long-tailed coat and tall hat striding across the Square on his way to his many activities.

Perhaps he might be hurrying to catch the horse-car to Cambridge where he was instructor in Speech at Harvard University (1891-94) and also at the Harvard University Divinity School (1892-1902). Or he might be going farther by train to New Haven where he gave courses at Yale University Divinity School (1892-1902).

The man had amazing vitality and in retrospect one wonders how he was able to cover such wide areas lecturing frequently at the University of Washington in Seattle; the University of Minnesota; Teacher's College, Columbia University. He was often in demand to appear at the University of Chicago where his devoted friend Shailer Mathews was Dean of the Divinity School at the University.

He commuted regularly to Newton Center, where he might take a "hack" from the Station to the Theological Seminary on "the Hill" or he might be met by a friend with a horse and carriage. If it were a good day, however, he would more likely take himself up the long steep hill for he loved passionately the out-of-doors and it would be his pleasure to have the time to enjoy the great trees and the magnificent view of the surrounding country side which the Seminary commanded.

Dr. Curry was 37 years old when he first started giving his courses in the Spoken Word and his famous Chapel Talks to aspiring ministers at the Newton Theological Institution (1884-1919) and was 72 years old when he retired--37 years of devoted service.

From 1919-1921, almost until the time of his death, he made the round trip once a week by night boat to New York to teach during the day at Union Theological Seminary in Union, New York, returning the same night by boat to Boston.

It was natural that to many people Dr. Curry became known as a "teacher of preachers." It has been estimated that of his ten thousand or more students of Speech, at least four thousand were aspiring ministers, trying to find the best way of expressing themselves. From his own personal experience he knew all too well the weaknesses and the pitfalls in manner of delivery, not only in the pulpit, but in every profession in which men are called upon to speak.

Curry Methods in the realm of speech came to be considered invaluable and to Dr. Curry's credit it was often observed "no two of his preachers sounded alike; none developed the ministerial drone, and not one sounded like Dr. Curry" as was sometimes the case with certain teachers who taught through means of imitation. Dr. Curry's theory was to develop the qualities of each individual and imitation, in his mind, was one of the deadly sins.

Dr. Curry's interests covered such a wide range it is difficult to attempt to place them in their proper perspective. He was almost as well known in the realm of Art as in Speech, his interest in it secondly only to his devotion to the Spoken Word. He frequently lectured on Art, both at the Museum of Fine Arts and at the old Art Club, only a few blocks away from Copley Square.*

His son, Haskell, recalls that, "practically all the painters in the Boston area were his friends and the Curry home on Bay State Road was filled with pictures done by the best artists of the day."**

It is little wonder that the stories about S. S. Curry were legion and little wonder that the Curry School of Expression held its "unique place in the cultural life of Copley Square!"***

*Corner of Dartmouth and Newbury Streets, now occupied by Bryant and Stratton School.

**Today's Speech, Nov. 1959. Vol VII, No. 4 published by the Speech Association of the Eastern States, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Penn.

***Waverly Magazine, May 1909, published by the Waverly Magazine Co., Inc. 15 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts, Established by Moses A. Dow 1850.

Yet "in the language of cold history", no monument stands in Copley Square to commemorate Dr. Curry. Even the building in which the Curry School operated is no more, and Dr. Curry did not live to see the realization of a permanent home for his beloved School.

Of that trio of Copley Square ministers, good friends drawn together through their humanitarian interests, yet all so different--the majestic Episcopal Bishop Phillips Brooks, George A. Gordon, bearer of the torch of Congregationalism, and Samuel Silas Curry, forever a minister at heart and indeed, only the first two are remembered in the Copley Square of today. Only the first two live on for future generations--memorialized in tangible materials, stone, marble and bronze.

Phillips Brooks looms giant size within the shelter of the North Transept of Trinity Church memorialized in the great Saint Gaudens statue erected by devoted followers.

George A. Gordon is forever remembered within the quiet beauty of the George A. Gordon Chapel, a lasting tribute made by loyal parishoners to their beloved pastor of more than forty years.

But for Samuel Silas Curry there is no tangible reminder that he too walked tall with his two good friends of the Cloth. Yet, just as surely he left his spiritual imprint on the square--not only through his School, which many enthusiasts have felt was "training for the soul"* (as well as Voice, Mind and Body); not only through his philosophical writings; not only through his reputation as the Boston newspapers proclaimed at the time of his passing, "the greatest teacher of voice and pantomime..Dr. Curry crystalized into permanent form, many theories of Art;" but through countless "intangibles," impossible to put into words or weld into bronze or stone.

Perhaps Dr. Horace G. Rahskopf** has succeeded in catching something of Dr. Curry's lasting contribution in a recent article entitled The Curry Tradition, "Waves of influence were initiated which flow out through the

*Dr. Shailer Mathews, former Dean of Divinity School of the University of Chicago. S. S. Curry published by Expression Co., Boston, Mass.

**Horace G. Rahskopf (Ph.D. University of Iowa, 1935) Student at the School of Expression 1920-21, Professor Emeritus of Speech at University of Washington and served as Chairman of its Department of Speech 1947-62. Served as President of the Speech Association of America in 1950. The Curry Tradition, article published in The Speech Teacher, Vol. XVII No. 4 November 1968.

years in ever widening cycles...the power of personality lives on.

S. S. Curry, Founder of the School of Expression emphasized the worth of the individual..a unique and living soul made in the image of the Creator."

CHAPTER V

THE FABRIC OF THE MAN

It has been said that "the fabric of a man's life is woven of many strands and to understand it rightly, one must trace back through his ancestry."

Those who knew Samuel Silas Curry, discerned many traits handed down from colorful forbears and could appreciate more fully the influence of the background which had helped to make the man.

The son of James Young Campbell Curry and Nancy (Young) Curry, Samuel Silas Curry was born November 23, 1847, in a little community of Chatata, Bradley County, East Tennessee, just thirteen years before the breaking of that tragic war between the States, where in East Tennessee it was not "just a War" but a "War within a War," with loyalties bitterly divided between those who believed so strongly in the Union that they could not countenance secession and those who could not bring themselves to take up arms against their own Southland. With families and old friends pitted against each other it was a struggle to the death, brother against brother, father against son, each clinging tenaciously to what he believed to be right, and James Campbell Curry was among those who believed in the Union cause.

During those years of conflict the valley of East Tennessee was a continuous pathway for the moving of troops both north and south, a gateway to Kentucky which never seceded, a vital and traversed route, before battles such as Chattanooga, Chickamauga and other names written in blood and ravaged to the point of starvation by both armies.

It was only natural that the bitter struggle for survival should be reflected in the lives of those who lived through it and the Currys of Bradley County were a part of the grim aftermath. For when the War was ended, the fight for food went on just as mercilessly. There were no schools and times were hard. After working on the land all day, trying to bring back life to a "scorched earth" Samuel Silas and his brothers labored to get an education, studying late into the night before the pine=knot light of the open fireplace.

But the Currys carried within them the blood of stalwart forbears who had overcome hardships in other periods, the sturdy stock of Scotch Coventers who early in the seventeenth century had been transplanted to North Ireland, where it was not easy to win an existence--all this as a part of the great plan of Queen Elizabeth and James Stuart to help stablize that unruly Colony for the Crown. Within them too, was the fighting spirit of the Campbell clan, their kinsman being John Campbell, Duke of Argyle.

And on the mother's side, the Youngs, like the Currys, had traveled the hard "wilderness road" by way of Virginia to establish homes in what later would become Tennessee, but which until after the Revolutionary War was still a part of North Carolina. Both Youngs and Currys were among those frontiersmen who went forth to defeat the British Redcoats at the Battle of King's Mountain, turning the tide in favor of the Colonies at a time when the chances for victory were at the lowest ebb.

Other interesting and romantic strains are to be found in the ancestral tapestry of the Curry family---the poet, Thomas Campbell, author of many stirring ballads; David Crockett, the untamed, courageous hero of the Alamo; Daniel Boone, child of nature and intrepid settler of new lands; Kit Carson, pioneer and fearless soldier.

"With the glamour of romance which was awakened in a young child's mind in such connections and a natural pride in the traditions of the Argyles, the Campbells, the Boones, the Carsons, and the Crockets, all familiar as household words, it was not strange that Samuel Silas Curry should have been early and strongly attracted to poetic expression. Nor was the religious bent of his nature anything else than natural and inevitable."*

Haskell B. Curry, son of Dr. Curry in an article called Memories of S. S. Curry, speaks poignantly of these two same influences in his father's early background, "His boyhood was spent on a farm in East Tennessee about forty miles northeast of Chattanooga. I visited this spot for the first time ten years after my father's death; and as I stood at the front door of the farmhouse which he had left some sixty years before, what he had told me about his boyhood took on a new meaning."**

"Two facts stand out. The first is that he was brought up in intimate contact with the out-of-doors; all his life he had a love of nature and he knew it not as one who had learned it from books, but as one who had learned it from childhood. The second was that there was a profoundly religious, indeed somewhat ascetic atmosphere...and he retained to his death an instinctive aversion--overcome to be sure, at times, but always there in strength--to tobacco, alcohol or a deck of cards."**

*In Memoriam by Nathan Haskell Dole in his foreword to the book POEMS by Dr. Samuel Silas Curry, published 1922 by the Expression Co., Boston, Mass.

**Memories of S. S. Curry article by Haskell B. Curry, published in Today's Speech, Vol VII, No. 4 by the Speech Association of the Eastern States Nov. 1959, Penn. State University, University Park, Penn.

For, by the time Samuel Silas was coming to manhood, the Currys, originally Scotch Presbyterians of the most rigid type, had added the vigorous doctrine of Methodism, the Wesleys having brought their teaching to America in 1783, converting many of the former Covenanters.

When he was eighteen, Samuel with his mind made up to become a Methodist minister, left the farm to make his own way, relinquishing all rights to his father's estate. Entering East Tennessee Wesleyan University* in Athens, Tennessee, the young man "studied and prayed, doing his own cooking in his room"** and was graduated, receiving his A.B. degree with honors in 1872.

Following a short period of teaching and preaching in Tennessee, the cultural advantages of Boston attracted him and he resumed his study at the Boston University, School of Theology, from which he received his degree of Bachelor of Divinity in 1875.

His career as a preacher, however, was tragically and suddenly interrupted; when, as a result of misuse, his voice failed him. Shocked and horrified at what had befallen him, the young many sought help from every available source in his attempt to discover the cause of his defect. Seeking out the greatest authorities in this country and abroad, he worked with Professor Lewis B. Monroe, Dean of the School of Oratory at Boston University. Also on the faculty as Professor of Mechanism of Speech at the School of Oratory was Alexander Graham Bell, with whom Samuel Curry was privileged to study as well as with the father, Alexander Melville Bell, inventor of the method, "Visible Speech".

In Europe he consulted with the famous Francois Alexandre Nicolas Cheri Delsarte,*** In Paris and with Francois Renier, head of the National Academy of Dramatic Art; Emil Behnke and Lennox Brown in London; Francesco Lamperti, Professor of singing at the University of Milan. He also studied with the great English actor, Sir Henry Irving, the two men becoming close friends,

*Later known as Grant University, now affiliated with the Univ. of Chattanooga Chattanooga, Tennessee.

**Letter from David A. Bolton, classmate of S. S. Curry, dated March 4,1929 Athen, Tennessee, Curry Archives.

***French teacher noted for his studies in the art of oratorical, musical and dramatic expression. The Currys adopted many of his theories interpreting his truism that "Impression precedes Expression."

and with Steel MacKaye*, interpreter in this country of the Delsarte Teachings.

All during this difficult period of seeking, Samuel Curry continued as best he could his courses at Boston University, receiving his degree of Master of Arts in 1878 and that of Doctor of Philosophy in 1879, and in that same year he received his diploma from Dr. Guilmette's School of Vocal Physiology in Boston.

Dr. Curry was granted an Honorary Litt.D. from Colby College, 1905.

Thus, there had been kindled the consuming fire which resulted in the dedication of Samuel Silas Curry to the study of the Spoken Word, which would last throughout his life time.

In giving his own account of the loss of his voice, Dr. Curry said, "The horror of those moments that Sunday morning when I stood before an audience in the middle of an address, unable to speak a word, has never been blotted from my memory...I determined to search even more diligently to find the cause."

While he was willing to learn from others, incorporating, for instance the wonderful work of Dr. Guilmette in the teaching of proper breathing and of Lamperti in the emotional control of breathing in his training of singers, Professor Monroe's methods of inspiring imaginative thinking in public speakers, the far-sighted principles of Delsarte, Dr. Curry was delving for himself, drawing his own conclusions from many aspects of nature. He came to realize if unified expression of the human being as a whole, was to be achieved, it was necessary to find a more scientific and philosophical approach than had hitherto been applied. He must discover the Laws that governed Vocal Expression in order that there might be true coordination of Voice, Mind and Body.

So, in trying to help himself, Samuel Silas Curry developed his own training program. Drawing from sixty different instructors with whom he was associated at different periods, he incorporated what he considered the best, until the "Curry Method" gained for him, the reputation of

*MacKaye was closely associated with Delsarte methods. "The School of Expression claims an essential difference from all schools of Oratory. The physical training is MacKaye's 'preparation of body' work for coordinatimg mind and body in action" From Werner's Magazine April 1894 Vol. XVI No. 4 Edgar S. Werner, Owner and Editor, 108 E. 16th St. New York, N. Y.
Early School records give Dr. Binney Gunnison's account of the

being one of the greatest authorities of the Spoken Work of all times.*

Rebelling violently against the old forms of Elocution (even the name itself) and the artificial means of teaching Speech prevalent in many of the Schools springing up, his School was the first to be called The School of Expression. (Dr. Curry preferred also that it not carry his name, so intent was he that it be The School of Expression.) And although legally, it was entitled The School of Expression, the Curry influence became so wide spread that "for most purposes, socially, commercially and historically, it became known as the Curry School of Expression."**

*Dorothy Sands, Broadway actress, School of Expression 1919-20, Radcliffe College 1915, lists "the three really great teachers I have known--Professor George Pierce Baker of the famous '47 Workshop' of Harvard, Elsie Fogerty of London and Dr. Curry". Miss Sands played in Racine's Phedre, 1966, in the part of Oenone, with one hundred performances in New York, an all-time record for Racine.

**Historical records of Dr. Binney Gunnison, Dean of the School, after the death of Dr. and Mrs. Curry.

THE SCOPE OF THE MAN

Chapter VI

There were those who knew of S. S. Curry as "the man who introudced 'slumming' to the great Phillips Brooks," Davis Wasgatt Clark* tells of the friendship, how the older man was drawn to the younger soon after Curry's arrival in Boston and of how the two went "slumming", witnessing together the seamy side of life. "Samuel Silas Curry, a lank, penniless lad from the mountains of Tennessee with true Methodist evangelistic fervor, gave himself in spare hours to city missionary work...found a 'flop hotel', a dank, horrid cellar where men paid five cents for a spot to lie down. One evening when Curry was telling of his experience, Phillips Brooks broke in exclaiming, "Curry, I'd like to go with you!" The next evening Curry called, but was told that 'Dr. Brooks is very busy, very much engaged'. Dr. Brooks however had overheard and broke into his important meeting with the statement, "Gentlemen, I have an appointment with that young man" and the two, arm in arm, left for the North End...thus began the friendship between Phillips Brooks and S. S. Curry which lasted a lifetime."

Dr. Curry considered his association with Phillips Brooks one of the richest experiences of his life. He became a member of Trinity Church, all the Curry children were baptized by their beloved Rector, and in his very busy life, the prominent Bishop never was too busy to give his support to his good friend's School of Expression and to address the student body.**

*He Acted Well His Part by Rev. Davis Wasgatt Clark, D. D. Zions Herald, Jan. 11, 1922, N. E. Methodist Monthly, 581 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

**Address given by Rev. Phillips Brooks at the School of Expression Oct. 8, 1891, shortly before his ordination, just prior to his becoming the Right Rev. Bishop of Massachusetts. (There was a Phillips Brooks Memorial Lectureship at the School of Expression Given especially for ministers) From the Brooks address. "People sometimes wonder, 'Is it possible that the time will come when the giant, the printing-press with its million tongues will take over the place of our poor, paltry speech?' Such an argumant confutes itself....no power can ever rival and usurp the human voice speaking through the human ear to the soul....We rejoice as our whole community rejoices to see the School which has already done such good work beginning another year of its happy and effcetive life."

It was not only the great and prominent however, who fell under his spell, The genial naturalness of S. S. Curry, his mellow voice, hearty laugh and his keen sense of humor attracted all types of people. For "Scholar though he surely was, scholarship was not the only, and perhaps not even the dominant, source of his effectiveness. Much of his influence arose from the warm and inspiring quality of the man...drawing affection and loyalty.."*

He was a superb teller of jokes, his ability as a raconteur well known. This led to a rather amusing incident about which his son, Dr. Haskell Brooks Curry writes. "One day when Father was dining with friends at a restaurant it was found when the party broke up, that a crowd had congregated to listen in on his conversation."**

Dr. Curry was intensely interested in the working man and his problems. Before the days of advanced machinery, he made a point of going into factories to try to help workers in monotonous tasks to accomplish their work in a more relaxed way. Among these was the Ford Factory in 1918 and letters from wives of the workmen expressed appreciation of the kindness rendered their husbands.***

The same was true of the National Cash Register of Dayton, Ohio, and in Boston Dr. Curry started a course with the Conductors of the Boston Elevated Railway System in the use of their voices. Dr. Binney Gunnison, close friend of the Currys and teacher at the School of Expression says "These were simply lines of activity that his overactive brain conceived and put into operation.****

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*Horace G. Rahskopf, The Curry Tradition, article in the Speech Teacher Vol XVII No. 4 Nov. 1968

**Today's Speech, Article by Haskell Brooks Curry, Vol. VIII, No. 4 published by Speech Association of the Eastern States, Nov. 1959, Penn. State Univ, University Park, Penn.

***Historical Data, Letter from Virginia Harrison of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Early School records.

****Historical Notes, Dr. Binney Gunnison, Dean of the School of Expression after the death of Dr. and Mrs. Curry.

Dr. Curry belonged to many of the leading Clubs of Boston, making his very individual contribution to each: The Boston Art Club* which he addressed on many occasions besides serving as Librarian for eighteen years; the Boston Authors Club (with more than a dozen books to his credit); the Twentieth Century Club,** where he had many friends, Dr. George Coleman (who started the Forum Hall in 1908 and who later became President of Boston Institute); Roger Babson, founder of Babson Institute; Charles Fletcher Dole; Nathan Haskell Dole; Paul Revere Frothingham; George A. Gordon.

The Boston Browning Society, organized in 1885 has the distinction of being the oldest in the world and it was natural that both Dr. and Mrs. Curry with their devotion to the Brownings, should play an active role in the Society. Mrs. Curry served as Secretary for a number of years and early records of the Society show that she gave many readings from both poets.

In the Curry's time the membership numbered close to three hundred and devotees stood in line (hopefully with their guests) to get into the meetings which were held for a quarter of a century at the Vendome Hotel.

All this interest was reflected in the life of the School of Expression, many commemorative programs featuring the Browning's works were presented every school session not only at the School itself but in conjunction with the Society.

It has been written of the Society, "The Browning cult was at its height in the nineties, flourishing nowhere more devotedly than in Boston and Cambridge..the meetings pretty formidable and solemn occasions."***

Fortunately it can be said today that the meetings are still taken in a delightfully serious fashion with the portraits of Robert and of Elizabeth Barrett Browning elevated on easles in their places of honor at

*Located at the corner of Newbury and Dartmouth Streets now occupied by Bryant Stratton School

**Samuel M. Lindsay letter 1965

***Copey of Harvard by J. Donald Adams Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston 1960

every gathering, all of which gives great pleasure to the loyal group finding lasting inspiration from the very fine programs presented.

In 1908 when Dr. Curry published his distinguished book Browning and the Dramatic Monologues* it was accepted with wide acclaim, in fact received "rave reviews". The Rev. John R. Gow, President of the Browning Society at that time, stated, "It seems to attack the central difficulty in the understanding and reading of Robert Browning's poetry..opens a wide door to the greatest poetry of the modern age."

Woodman Bradbury, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Society wrote, "The appreciation of Browning's genius began for me in the class room of my teacher, S. S. Curry."

Favorable newspaper comments on the Browning book, both local and national included, the Boston Advertiser, saying, "Dr. Curry's book is one that leads the reader to a new appreciation of the art of the great poet..a genuine and sympathetic contribution to culture."

And from the Boston Herald, "Dr. Curry treats the subject at length and with a wealth of illustrative examples..an exceedingly helpful study."

"The statement of many who have testified that Dr. Curry was first instrumental in leading them to an appreciation and genuine love of Browning will be accepted without discount after reading this book...the lifting of the veil of obscurity from the writings of Browning." Milwaukee, Wisconsin Sentinel "Few can read this book without obtaining from it a better understanding of Browning. Boston Ideas, "It is the work of a serious student who has a comprehensive knowledge of literature, the theme is clearly conceived and exceptionally well presented..the book is fresh, vital.."Lyceumite and Talent, Chicago.

*Published by The Expression Company, Boston 1908.

"A volume to be read and studied by those who admire the best in modern literature" Mirror, Manchester, N. H.

"A book that sheds an entirely new light on Browning and should be read by every student of the great master." Journal of Education.

Another Club which Dr. Curry thoroughly enjoyed was the "Puddingstone Club" and according to Mr. Ralph Davol* of Taunton, Massachusetts, who was also a member, Dr. Curry was to the Puddingstoners, a "jolly good fellow.. we were glad he was attracted to Boston..a Club true to its name, a miscellaneous collection of odd people preserving the humorous side of the Boston of Holmes' day." On its roster were such men as Nixon Waterman, the poet, whom the members called "the nearly perfect man" and Winthrop Packard, Editor of the New England Magazine. With pride they counted among their members "Three Sams beside Uncle Sam--namely, Sam Walter Foss, the poet who wrote The House by the ~~End~~ Side of the Road; Sam Lindsay, beloved Boston cleric with his noted Scottish burr, which has never rubbed down; and Sam Curry, instigator of much of the fun."

Mr. Davol tells of a Sunday in 1905 when Dr. Curry's close friend Erasmus "(Raz") Wilson, Editor of the Pittsburgh Gazette and writer of the column, "The Quiet Observer," had come on from Pennsylvania to join with the group in making a pilgrimage to Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. Led by Frank Sanborn who "had known Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau and all that Concord gang--a remnant of Emerson's day" as Mr. Davol expressed it, the Puddingstoners were in their glory. A few days later there appeared in the Boston Transcript a cartoon depicting Dr. Curry, Sanborn, Raz Wilson, Nixon Waterman, E. H. Clement ("a refined scholar of Transcript fame") and a few other jovial members, all with linked arms--the cartoon entitled Souvenir Trip in Honor of Concord Philosophers and Mr. Davol said, "Raz Wilson, (The Quiet Observer) loved it all."

*Mr. Davol, Harvard graduate, class of 1896 and former newspaper man connected with the Old Boston Transcript, gave the Ralph Davol Scholarship in 1921, as a mark of appreciation of the fine work the School is doing and my personal regard for Dr. Curry. Early School Records.

In an interview with Mr. Davol*, many human aspects of Dr. Curry's many-sided nature were brought out. Dr. Curry used to visit the Davol home especially on Sundays, seeking out the Rocky Woods area at the edge of Taunton, going to Big Rock, a perfect location to listen to echoes, always a fascinating study for Dr. Curry as he measured the length of time between voice and echo in his untiring interest in every phase of human speech. He told Davol of his early speech misfortune, "I was a minister but had to get out of the pulpit when my voice gave way -- cracked to pieces -- I'll never forget it -- something had to be done. "

In recalling the many fine paintings Dr. Curry had in his home on Bay State Road, Mr. Davol chuckled as he spoke of those in his bedroom, "Curry surely enjoyed the human form divine!"

Summing up his talk, Mr. Davol stressed that quality of which all those who really knew Dr. Curry were so keenly aware, that Dr. Curry was first of all "a great philosopher and idealist," Mr. Davol adding a bit sagely, "but depending upon someone else to get a good living for him." Thus Mr. Davol put his finger upon ~~the weakness~~, the lack of practicality, in the highly developed artistic nature of Samuel Silas Curry.

To many people, Dr. Curry was somewhat of a mystic, some devotees going so far as to speak of him as a "saint." But all who had the privilege of knowing him well seem to have agreed that first and foremost Samuel Silas Curry was a philosopher.

Dr. Shailer Mathews**, Dean of Divinity School, University of Chicago, said, "Dr. Curry is essentially a philosopher. The volumes he has published are something more than prescriptions for gesture and voice production. They are a contribution to the art of education."

*1966 at his home in Taunton, Massachusetts
**Dr. Shailer Mathews, S. S. Curry published by Expression Company, Boston, Mass.

The late Dr. Everett Herrick, President of Andover-Newton Theological Institution* 1926-45, paid tribute to his former teacher of Speech, "Dr. Curry had the soul of a poet and the mind of a philosopher. Read one of his books and see how true this is. Most of us (his pupils) I regret to say were too dull to appreciate him. Years afterward I did and lamented my student attitude."**

In the opinion of Dr. Samuel M. Lindsay, prominent New York and Boston clergyman who knew Dr. Curry intimately, "Dr. Curry was a scholar who possessed the understanding mind..a philosopher who should have had a chair in some great institution of learning instead of having to struggle with the more mundane tasks of teaching and the organizational work of running a school."***

And perhaps herein was where Dr. Curry failed. He was not a business man, often impractical and impulsive, and much of the burden was carried by his capable partner, Mrs. Curry.

Upon Dr. Curry's death, Dr. Lindsay served as the second President of the School of Expression 1922-23, Of that critical transition period through which the School had to pass, Dr. Lindsay says, "It was friendship..an act of devotion to my friend and former teacher that I took over. It meant working hard to prevent the School from going out of existence. Dr. Curry enriched my life and I treasure his memory."****

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*Formerly the Newton Theological Seminary or Institution, Newton, Mass.
**Everett C. Herrick, Turns Again Home - published by Pilgrim Press Boston, 1949
***Samuel M. Lindsay letters 1965-66
****Ibid

FRIENDSHIPS

CHAPTER VII

The scope of S. S. Curry could well be measured by the breadth and depth of his friendships. "His many friends testify to the interestingness of his personality."* Among them were; John Greenleaf Whittier; John Burroughs and what rapport there must have been between those two nature lovers; Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler; Borden Parker Bowne**, liberal theologian and religious writer; Cardinal O'Connell; Frances E. Willard, pioneer in settlement work and loyal worker for the Temperance movement (one of Dr. Curry's pet causes.).; Ole Bull, the great violinist.

Dr. Curry's close relationship with Dr. Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard College, was well known. Dr. Samuel Lindsay tells of it, recalling with pleasure the times when he was invited to join the two older men saying, "Dr. Eliot held Dr. Curry in high esteem...was in sympathy with Dr. Curry's ideals and work..they often discussed Dr. Curry's dream of developing his School into a national college..Dr. Eliot enjoyed Curry's lively conversation as well as his philosophical discourse.***

At the time of Dr. Curry's passing it was Dr. Eliot who gave the principal address at the Memorial Services in honor of Dr. Curry held at Old South Church in Copley Square.

*Dr. Haskell Brooks Curry, from article in Today's Speech Vol. VII, No.4 published by the Speech Association of the Eastern States, Nov. 1959 Penn. State University, University Park, Penn.
**Professor of Philosophy, Boston University, 1876-1910
***Samuel M. Lindsay letter 1965

The Curry School became nationally and internationally known with "Great actors of the day recognizing its unique value."* Sir Henry Irving, beloved and loyal personal friend, made possible the first endowed chair of the School, the Sir Henry Irving Instructorship in Dramatic Training. Mabel (Curry) Galassi, daughter of Dr. Curry, recalls the thrill that it gave all the family when Sir Henry made his stage appearances in Boston, always providing a box for the Currys.

Sir Henry, assisted by the great and beautiful Ellen Terry, Dr. Curry's favorite actress, gave a benefit performance** in Boston to aid the Endowment Fund which Dr. Curry so longed to establish on a permanent basis.

Madame Sarah Bernhardt on her American tour during World War I, paid the Curry's the tribute of inviting the Faculty and students to meet with her after her Boston performance.

Dr. Curry's friendships enriched the life of the School of Expression. In fact, Mrs. Howard Weld Draper*** of Milton Massachusetts writes "In looking back on my full two years at Curry (summers too) I feel that I learned as much from the people I met there as I did from the books. By no means the least of these in my youthful eyes was Alfred Lunt who came to our dances."

Poets of the day came to read their original selections at the School-- Edwin Markham, famous for his poem The Man With The Hoe; James Whitcomb Riley Nixon Waterman; Sam Walter Foss; Thomas Daley; Dennis McCarthy; Mary Baker Eddy, "Dr. Curry's personal friend..admiring her genius..feeling she was the greatest woman America had produced**** Isabella Stewart Gardner, famous "Mrs. Jack," who often popped into the School of Expression to hear Dr. Curry's lectures. Mrs. Gardner attended recitals given by the students of the School and in turn, issued the invitation for Dr. Curry to bring pupils "to tea" at her Venetian Palace, Fenway Court.***** Their mutual love of art was a natural bond between them.

*Professor S. S. Curry and His Fundamental Work for Life and Art by B. O. Flower in Arena Magazine, Mr. Flower Editor 1914, Composition and Presswork by Atlantic Printing Co. 179 South St. Boston, Mass.
**Early Records of School of Expression
***Mrs. Howard W. Draper Milton, Mass formerly Louise Bolton (C.G.'12)
****Samuel Lindsay letter 1965

the School, the Sir Henry Irving Instructorship in Dramatic Training. Mabel (Curry) Galassi, daughter of Dr. Curry, recalls the thrill that it gave all the family when Sir Henry made his stage appearances in Boston, always providing a box for the Currys.

Sir Henry, assisted by the great and beautiful Ellen Terry, Dr. Curry's favorite actress, gave a benefit performance** in Boston to aid the Endowment Fund which Dr. Curry so longed to establish on a permanent basis.

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**Early Records of School of Expression
***Mrs. Howard W. Draper Milton, Mass formerly Louise Bolton (C.G.'12)
****Samuel Lindsay letter 1965
*****Mrs. Howard W, Draper letter "Among the friends of Dr. Curry whom I met in school was the famous "Mrs. Jack" Gardner, an exciting and frequent visitor to our classes as well as recitals in the old Pierce Building. We were all fascinated by her 'enameled' face which defied 'expression'. At least the rumor was that she had had a "Frenc Porcelain Job' done." Mrs. Draper recalls being entertained at the Venetian Palace, Fenway Court.
Mrs. Draper also recalls Dr. Curry's warning so that they would not be startled by her face.

Dr. Curry's knowledge of Art was immense. His son Haskell B. Curry, in an article published in Today's Speech* says, "Practically all of the painters in the Boston area were his friends." He was in demand as a lecturer on the subject, not only in the East, but as far west as the University of Washington in Seattle.

As early as 1893, at the time of the Worlds Fair in Chicago, an important feature of the cultural program was a series of more than "Twenty Lectures presented by Dr. S. S. Curry ART STUDIES AT THE WORLD'S FAIR, and after the passing of 75 years, the range of subjects included is impressive and comprehensive.

Recent Movements in Art; Romanticism, Realism and Impressionism.
Pre-Raphaeliteism and Recent Movements in British Art.
The Spirit of Greek Art
The Relation of Poetry to Art
Raphael and Michaelangelo
Leonardo da Vinci
Corot and Millet
The Art Schools of Paris
Art as Related to Religious Movement
Idealism and Realism; Browning's "Filippo Lippi"

Up until 1919, only two years before his death, Dr. Curry was continuing to give lectures at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston; two of his timely sujects listed,

Art Movements of Our Time
How to Look at Pictures

One of the deepest and most significant friendships was the Bell-Curry relationship which began at the time Dr. Curry was seeking help in regaining his voice, when he had the privilege of studying under Dr. Alexander Melville Bell, father of Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone.

It is a fascinating story--three generations of Scotland Bells - the grandfather, Alexander, son of a shoemaker, who became the outstanding

*Today's Speech, Article by Haskell Brooks Curry, Vol. VIII, No. 4 published by Speech Association of the Eastern States, Nov. 1959, Penn. State University University Park, Penn.

authority on Speech in his day; the second, Alexander Melville Bell, who continued his father's work, inventing his method of "Visible Speech" which revolutionized the teaching and the psychological treatment of deaf mutes; and the third, Alexander Graham Bell, who studied with both his father and grandfather and, the knowledge acquired through the scientific delving into the intricacies of the human voice for three generations enabling him to master the principles of the telephone. Biographers agree that it was this that gave him the edge over his rival experimenters. The race was close won by only a few hours over one Elisha Gray of Chicago.

In a slim volume which Dr. Curry wrote at the time of Alexander Melville Bell's death, entitled Some Memories With Fragments from a Pupil's Note Book* he pays tribute to his former teacher, "I feel almost as if I were writing a tribute to my father..of all my teachers (numbering fifty or more in different parts of the world) he had the greatest influence over me." This feeling of devotion was reciprocated, for on the eightieth birthday of Dr. Bell, Dr. Curry received an endowment to the School of Expression sent, "As a testament of appreciation of your efforts to establish the study of the spoken word on a secientific basis."

Alexander Graham Bell** and Samuel Silas Curry*** were contemporaries and during their years of teaching at Boston University there developed between them a natural and sympathetic bond which lasted throughout their lifetimes. While Dr. Curry's work in the field of Speech was more from the creative aspect, and Dr. Bell's interest was with the mechanism of Speech, at many points their work was interrelated and in many ways there were characteristic similarities in their natures.

Both men were philosophers and dreamers of dreams; both gave unsparingly of themselves in their dedication to the scientific study of the Spoken Word, believing that the ability to communicate effectively is the very foundation of civilized society.

*Copyright by School of Expression Published by University Press, Cambridge, Mass 1904

**A. Graham Bell, Instructor of Vocal Physiology; Culture of the Speaking Voice; Mechanism of Speech; Visible Speech; Methods of Instructing Deaf Mutes in Articulation.

***S.S. Curry, Instructor and Lecturer in Elocution and Oratory;

Another similarity not so scientific, but rather singular and a bit amusing is that the two looked alike, according to Dr. Samuel Lindsay* who knew well the Bell-Curry friendship. And, it is true that their pictures** bear a striking resemblance with their abundance of hair and flowing beards worn in the manner of the day, their bright penetrating eyes and impressive bearings.

The Bells were always loyal supporters of the School of Expression*** the name of Dr. Alexander Melville Bell appearing on the list of Founders and Dr. Alexander Graham Bell serving as a Trustee and Chancellor of the School for fifteen years.

One little-known bit of telephone history is the fact that Samuel Silas Curry was with his friend Alexander Graham Bell when the historic message came through on March 10, 1876, when Mr. Bell experienced "great satisfaction and delight to hear a complete sentence clearly understood by telephone"****

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*Interview with Dr. Samuel Lindsay - September 1966

**Former students of the School of Expression will recall the portrait of Dr. Bell hanging on the studio wall to which Dr. Curry pointed with pride and affection. Only recently, January 1969, a gift was made to Curry College by the New England Telephone Company of Boston, a fine likeness of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, a copy of the original painting which hangs in the home of Dr. Mellville Bell Grosvenor (grandson of Alexander Graham Bell) at his home in Bethesda, Md. The artist was J.W.E. Forster acting on a commission of the Canadian National Gallery 1919. Dr. Bell was dictating while the artist worked.

***The continuity of the friendship is being carried on at the present with the grandson of Alexander Graham Bell, Dr. Melville Grosvenor, Editor of the National Geographic Magazine, serving as a member of the present Board of Trustees of Curry College, Milton, Massachusetts.
Also there is the Alexander Graham Bell Honor Society at Curry College composed of students achieveing outstanding academic honors.

****Written in Mr. Bell's own olghand. From Boston University records.

According to Dr. Curry's daughter, Mabel (Curry) Galassi* of New York City, "Father was with Mr. Bell much of the time, he was making his experiments, as he was interested in anything and everything to do with the human voice and naturally he was excited over the near-results Mr. Bell was obtaining. So, on that day when Mr. Bell spilled acid on his clothes and sent his urgent call for help to his assistant, Mr. Watson, in another room, ' Mr. Watson, come here. I want you,' Father was present." As his daughter Mrs. Galassi expressed it, "Father's was the third ear to get the message."

*Mrs. Galassi is still living. Her husband Mr. Pasquali Galassi, bears out her story as he recalls hearing Dr. Curry in later years relating the incident to his family.

CHAPTER X

THE TIMES

The times were ripe for the Currys. The educational world stood in dire need of their honesty. The Spoken Word awaited a cleansing revival.

The art of technique of speaking in order that men may communicate most effectively is one of the oldest subjects in organized instruction.

It can boast a distinguished past. Cicero's definition of Oratory was "A good man speaking well." But today even the words Elocution or Oratory are woefully out of style and to name them is apt to bring forth a smile.

In this day when the written word commands such respect, even reverence, it is hard to realize the emphasis placed upon the spoken word in an earlier century. As late as the first quarter of the present century, the art held a firm and dignified place in education. Emerson said that "A man cannot speak but he judges and reveals himself. With his will or against his will he draws his own portrait to the eye of others by every word."

For a generation of younger people, however, born into a world of fast-paced entertainment consisting of radio, movies, and television, it is impossible to grasp the importance of the role of "Public Readers" during an era not too far removed.

But there are still many people who can look back to a time when just as it was considered almost imperative that every properly-brought-up child should be exposed to "music lessons," so Elocution lessons or "reading" were an important part of his cultural training, and it was an

accepted saying by Macaulay, "To learn to read well is the business of half of life."*

There are those who can recall with a touch of nostalgia, the days when "Platform Readers" held audiences enthralled with their dramatic presentations under the great tents during the summer Chatauqua programs.

Actually, the mission of the "Readers" was an ancient and important one--carying on the art of the wandering story tellers of old, who sat around the campfires, spinning their tales, keeping alive the traditions of the past and inspiring visions of the future.

Clifton Fadiman in his "Praise for Quotations"** places a certain responsibility upon all of us. "All mankind is but a carrier and part of our precious burden consists of things that have been said perfectly. Immortality is not unconditional. It cannot be kept alive solely by scholars and professional intellectuals. It must be kept alive by you and me."

And as the Public Readers presented their classical and dramatic, as well as amusing programs they did just this, providing at the same time a cultural, pleasant and exceedingly popular form of entertainment. They were in great demand. And, for almost half a century, many of the best were trained by the Currys of Boston.

For it was in Boston that "Elocution as an organized force in higher education had its beginning"*** according to Werner's magazine, a monthly Journal devoted entirely to "Expression--Vocal and Physical."****

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*Thomas Babington Macauley, 1800-1850, English historian, essayist and politician, who first gained popular acclaim through declamation of his poems and essays.

**PRAISE FOR QUOTATIONS from ANY NUMBER CAN PLAY, World Publishing Co., Cleveland, Ohio, 1957.

***Werner's Magazine, established in 1879, Vol. XVI, No. 4, Edgar S. Werner Owner and Editor, 108 East 16th Street, New York. April 1894 issue.

****Ibid

In the Hub the flowering of the Art was fostered "occupying a position of dignity, influence and popularity which has long been the wonder of other cities"*

Although Werner's Magazine was a New York publication, it was announced that the April (1894) issue would be dedicated to THE ART IN NEW ENGLAND and to Boston in particular. "Although" says Werner, "A complete account of what New England has done and is doing is out of the question in one issue. Several months would be needed to obtain and print the information necessary for a satisfactory report."**

Werners, however, decided to do the best it could, saying "We shall wait no longer" and they succeeded in producing 160 pages of the results of their investigations (some in fine print).

Moreover, Werner wisely decided to choose good New Englanders to write the articles, the New York editors explaining, "We have thought it advisable to let New England be portrayed by New England people who certainly are friendly toward themselves and are likely to make the best showing possible. If they err at all they are apt to err in their own favor."***

And typically enough the "good New Englanders" did not hesitate to extol "in their own favor." They wrote "It was in Boston that elocution received its first great impetus in this country. It was Boston that gave birth to the first School of Oratory in the United States. Boston University was the first University to establish a School of Oratory as one of its Departments. Here, too, McKaye gave the first public exposition of the method of Delsarte and here the Delsarte system was first taught in an established school. Boston has lived up to its historic past and today

*Werner's Magazine, established in 1879, Vol. XVI, No. 4, Edgar S. Werner, Owner and Editor,
**Ibid
***Ibid

its schools of oratory are not only the oldest, but are generally conceded to be the largest, best equipped and most efficient."*

The issue contains an article on the School of Expression, a very complimentary tribute to the work of the Currys. Many aspects of the work in general throughout New England were covered but Boston came in for the lion's share of praise.

The art of Public Reading, Elocution, Oratory, call it what you will, was not confined, however, to Boston, nor, to any one area in this country or abroad. We have but to study old programs and periodicals of the era to realize the absorbing part it played, and how far reaching it was.

We read of a Philadelphia Convention of Elocutionists, held at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, which lasted an entire week with leaders in the field from all over the country in attendance. An old program graphically emphasizes its significance, the seven-day session consisting of Papers relative to the subject, interspersed with music, Recitals, and "Readings with Orchestral Accompaniment." We are particularly proud to note that a Paper was delivered by S. S. Curry of Boston, his subject typical of his convictions, THE ADVANCE NEEDED IN ELOCUTION. And, on the last day of the Convention, we find Mrs. Anna Baright Curry of Boston listed as the leader of an open discussion.

It would be pleasant indeed, if we could continue to elaborate upon the glory past elocutionary/of Boston and other places, but sadly enough there is another side to the picture and we cannot pass over lightly the deterioration of the Art. Perhaps it was just a case of too much of a good thing being too much. And although there were some honest teachers, there were many opportunists. "Apostles of the artificial," teaching through "imitation" instead of re-creating; striving to "get an effect without a cause," using

*Werner's Magazine, Edgar S. Werner, Owner and Editor, No. 108 East 16th Street, New York, April 1894.

"rotund tones" and "siblant whisperings," stereotyped speech and meaningless gestures, melodramatic to the point that it was often ridiculous, with people old enough to know better simulating affection, tragedy--the whole gamut of emotions, as they interpreted badly hackneyed masterpieces, such as "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," Hamlet's "Sililoquy." Many were the atrocities committed in the name of "Elocution."

Dr. Charles Eliot, President of Harvard College, a friend of Dr. Curry's and in sympathy with his goals, in an address in Boston* in 1894, warned against "declamation rather than speaking" urging "speaking, not reciting," and Dr. Eliot was putting it mildly.

Fortunately there were dedicated people who finally succeeded in breaking free from antiquated forms, developing sane and natural methods, establishing the study of the Spoken Word on a scientific basis, both in the teaching profession and on the stage--Monroe and the Bells, Delsarte and McKaye, Sir Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, to name only a few who shared the idealism of the Currys.

Certainly there were many schools** springing into existence helping to make Boston the "Elocutionary Centre of the United States". Many of the best of these had received their initiative from the late Lewis Baxter Monroe, head of the School of Oratory of Boston University and because of his deep far-reaching influence, they contributed their share in improving the art of the Spoken Word.

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*At the Y.M.C.A. of Boston, Mass.

**Werners Magazine, Vol XVI, No. 4, April 1894. Edgar S. Werner, Owner and Editor, 108 E. 16th Street, New York.

Besides the (Curry) School of Expression (founded in 1879), listed in Vol XVI No. 4, April 1894 issue of Werner's Magazine are
Boston School of Oratory, 1884 under the leadership of Prof. Moses True Brown
Boston College of Oratory which had the distinction of being the only school of oratory in Boston with a "Lady Principal", Mrs. Clara Power Edgerly. However, neither of the above schools, so similar in name, had any connection with the Boston University School of Oratory.
The Boston College of Oratory became a part of the (Curry) School of Expression in 1895 according to an Announcement published by the School of Expression
The New England Conservatory School of Elocution and College of Oratory
The Bickford School of Elocution
The Blish School of Elocution
The Emerson School of Oratory, (founded in 1880) by Charles Wesley Emerson under the name of Monroe Conservatory of Oratory, changed to the name of Emerson School of Oratory 1889.

CHAPTER XI

"THE METHOD" AND ITS DISCIPLES

"Man can give nothing to his fellow-men but himself." This oft-repeated quote from the German Poet and critic, Augustus Shlegal,* was the challenge which Dr. Curry threw out, not only to his pupils but to the world. The great aim of the School of Expression was to help men and women develop their own talents and no doubt this was the essence of the doctrine or the "Curry Method" as it came to be called, making disciples of those who came in close contact with it.

A prominent business man expressed it this way, "Go to the School and if there is anything in you they will bring it out; teach you to know yourself; show you what you are in comparison with what you may become."

Former President of Colby College, Charles L. White wrote, "As your student, you held before me intellectual and ethical ideals I still am trying to realize."

Graduates of the School testified with zealous enthusiasm, calling it "a fundamental training for life."

Luella Clay Carson, President of Mills College, Oakland, California stated, "I feel deeply indebted for this, the most lasting inspiration in my work as a teacher of my fellow-man."

Caroline A. Hardwick, Curry graduate and teacher of speech at Wellesley College expressed the feeling of many when she said, "We know there is something BIG here. If only we can get it out to the world."

Certainly there was no room for littleness in the Curry program

*Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature by Augustus Shlegal 1879
Augustus Wilhelm von Schlegel, 1767-1845 German critic, poet, and translator (brother of Karl Wilhelm Frederich von Schlegel 1772-1829) German philosopher, poet and critic.

and it was no doubt, through the graduates that the message became so far-flung. Many who came for full or part-time study were already men and women of maturity--clergymen literally by the thousands; teachers of Expression or Dramatics in colleges and theological seminaries; lawyers of high standing; all of whom recognized the value of being able to speak well.

And as they became aware of that "something different," the "getting it out to the world" became for many of them a "mission." As they filled the positions that awaited Curry graduates (often times the supply unable to meet the demand*), they scattered into all parts of the country in the Speech and Dramatic Departments of the best schools, colleges and universities from Maine to California until there was a saying "Curry is national in its influence."

And even today after the passing of a half century, letters come from many old grads, expressing the same exuberant enthusiasm and loyalty, the tenor of them much the same, "I still say I wouldn't take any colossal treasure if I had to give up the results of the time at Curry;" "Nothing could ever take the place of Curry training--it has helped in every aspect of my life;" "It transformed the world from the prosaic into a beautiful glowing thing."

Names of graduates came to be strongly linked with certain institutions. To name only a few; Josephine Holmes, Head of the Dramatic Department at Mount Holyoke College; Ethel Priscilla White, Wheaton College; Florence Cunningham, teacher of Spoken English at both Vassar and Smith Colleges before going on to Selznick Studios to teach Hollywood stars; Pauline Sherwood Townsend, Belmont College, Nashville, Tennessee; Margaret Weisbrad, Belhaven College, Jackson, Mississippi; Edith M. Smaill, Wellesley College;

*One of Dr. Curry's little jokes which he told with relish was that he "lost a lot of good teachers because his training brought out the best in them, making them so attractive they seemed to get married early."

actors

Edith W. Moses, both Wellesley and Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia; Claudia Potter, Perkins Institute for the Blind.

Many set up their own "Studios of the Spoken Word" stretching across the continent--from Father Robert Simons Studio in Berkeley, California to Grace M. Warner's School of Dramatic and Lyrical Art in East Orange, New Jersey; Maybelle Suzanne MacKaye's Studio in New Bedford, Massachusetts to Clara Kuck's Speech Studio in Salt Lake City, Utah--their mark of distinction being, they taught the "Curry Method."

The Curry Summer Schools, "little democracies of education"* spread to many locales. And as sources of learning in a relaxed atmosphere they prospered as long as the School of Expression functioned. So, not only were there devotees continously "going out" from the home base in Boston, but hundreds of followers in various parts of the country faithfully attending the summer terms, and also becoming imbued with zeal to "spread the Curry gospel."

Beginning in 1886 at Martha's Vineyard, there was the first Summer School ever held in this country, when the young Miss Baright was forced to take over the responsibilities of the great Professor Monroe.

The second session was held at Saratoga, New York in 1887, followed by a Boston term in 1888** The fourth Summer Term was held in Lancaster, Massachusetts in 1889 with a fifth in 1890 at Newport, Rhode Island, while the sixth in 1891 was carried on as one of the Departments of the Summer Sessions at Harvard University.

The eighth and ninth terms were held in Boston and in 1896 an outstanding "Anniversary Summer Term" was held at historic Plymouth, Mass.

*Binney Gunnison's HISTORICAL NOTES. Dr. Gunnison was Dean of the School after the passing of the Currys.

**This first Boston Term was followed by many others. There was often a Boston Term planned to follow the sessions held elsewhere in order that students could plan to attend two during a season.

Certainly none could have been more distinguished that the "Special Delsarte Summer Term" conducted in 1897 by Dr. Curry, it's principal theme, the reviewing of the philosophy and the methods of the great master Francois Delsarte.

In 1898 "at the request of leading educators from every State in the South"* the first Southern Term was established at the beautiful mountain resort of Monteagle, Tennessee and was continued with great success for two summers. Then, in 1900 the first of the popular Asheville, North Carolina sessions opened and for three decades students were drawn to Asheville in ever increasing numbers from all parts of the country.**

A "Northwestern Summer Term" was held at Wesley College in 1905 at Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; a "Pacific Summer Class" in 1907 at the University of Washington, Seattle; "A Western Term" in 1909 held in the Fine Arts Building in Chicago. Others were held at Eureka Springs, Arkansas; New York University; Texas Christian University; University of Vermont.

During the 1911 season, five terms were being conducted simultaneously--a "Southwestern Term," Houston, Texas; a term in Seattle, Washington; the Asheville Summer Term; a Boston Term at the School of Expression and a Chicago Term held at the John Marshall Law School. And in 1921, the summer before Dr. Curry's death, besides the Boston Term and the Asheville term, there were others going on in Waxahachie, Texas, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Chicago, Illinois.

And what was this "Curry Method" which exerted such an influence? The question is not easily answered in this day when the material values and the factual are so emphasized.

*Expression, Dec. 1897, edited by S. S. Curry, Ph.D. Published by School of Expression, 458 Boylston St., Boston, Massachusetts.

**An outgrowth of these famous Asheville Terms was the Plonk School of Creative Arts, founded in 1924 under the direction of Laura Plonk, Curry graduate (Phil.D '18) assisted by her sister Lillian Plonk (Special '16)

If an attempt were made to sum it up in one word perhaps it could be called a "philosophy." Just as the Reverend Everett C. Herrick, D.D.* summed up the character of Samuel Silas Curry in the word, "philosopher," saying "if you don't believe it turn to his books," again we can only say "Turn to Dr. Curry's writing to plumb even in a small measure, the depth of his principles."

Certainly it was far deeper than a mere training of Speech or even a striving for naturalness in action. Its aim was "the liberation of the self from restrictions set by self-consciousness, whether of soul or muscle so that the body could express accurately the spiritual experience." It embodied the training of personality as a whole; an integrity of character through the coordination of voice, mind and body. And there were those followers who would add, "training for men's souls."** In essence it was that "the law of simplicity is the universal governing of all art; true expression like Life depends upon a certain organic unity, a coordination of thought and feeling revealing itself through the body as a medium. There is no such thing as merely physical expression. True expression is a revelation of mind dominating the body."

Here is a simple example given by Dr. Curry. "When a man's courage is awakened, when he becomes conscious that he is really an expression of infinite life, his body straightens in obedience to the active will, transcending the physical."

"Action is man's first language and primarily concerned with the revelation of character. A realization of our actions is necessarily a realization of motives, helping us to understand our fellow men, to enter into sympathetic touch with them--to communicate."

*Turns Again Home, Pilgrim Press Boston 1949, written by the late Dr. Everett C. Herrick, President of Andover-Newton Theological Institution, 192 -45.

**Dean Shailer Mathews of the University of Chicago in THE WORLD TODAY, Chicago, Ill, Feb. 1908.

"There is a oneness pervading all objects--all life. The higher any organism the greater the unity. The higher the race of beings, the more it seems akin to everything else. While each human being as an individual is a center of conscious identity, to live we must communicate. A universal conception of the immortal life is one of love."

Dr. Curry's constant maxims were "From within outward," "Thought (or impression) must precede and determine expression." "The flower blooms from within. The leaves of the tree are the outerance or as we contract the word, utterance, the expression of life emanating from the root. The bird sings from a full heart--the kitten plays because of exuberance of life--whatever is natural acts from an inner fullness..an inner depth."

Dr. Curry said that the aim of the Founders of the School was "not only to reform Elocution but to bring to the speaker, the actor, the reader, an appreciation, a desire to study their arts from all points of view until man comes to realize the dignity of all art." And closely tied in with this philosophy is another quote from Augustus Shlegal.* "Art cannot exist without nature."

Relating the importance of expression to education in general, Dr. Curry wrote, "The aim and first step of all education is to awaken, to inspire..a deeper process than the acquisition of knowledge, even the attainment of culture--the formation of character, the highest part of education---. Expression reveals not the degree of information of the human mind but the attitude of soul, coordination and unity in being, enabling the educated man to convey to others --to communicate."

Dr. Curry agreed with Emerson who once said "Imitation is suicide," and with Dr. Curry this belief was a passion. He said, "There is nothing that

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*Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature 1879 by Augustus Shlegal, German Poet and critic.

has a more superficializing effect upon human feeling and human instruction, tone, vigor, originality of thinking than imitation. It is mechanical elocution -- meaningless and artificial. That the harmony of man's whole being may be established there must be coordination of thought and feeling--thought and imagination in sympathetic union."

It was said* "You cannot recognize any one of the thousands of readers and preachers taught by the Currys--by any mannerism of tone or gesture borrowed from the Currys. For instance, you can often tell when some one has studied with the great Professor Churchill** because he preaches like Professor Churchill. But the only similarity between those who came under Dr. Curry's instruction at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Newton Seminary, Boston University and the School of Expression is a directness and unaffected sincerity."

One theory of Dr. Curry's was "Repose is not inactivity, not a lack of power, but a reserve and control of power--active at the center, not at the surface. A machine is actuated from without. Man moves from within." And one of his sayings was "Imagination is the mind of the heart."

All these are but excerpts from Dr. Curry's writings and teachings, but of such were the principles which he endeavored to instill not only at the School of Expression, but in many of the highest institutions of learning. Dr. Curry was Professor of Oratory at Boston University 1879-88, holding the Snow Professorship of Oratory; acting Professor of Elocution at Newton Theological Institution (Newton, Massachusetts) 1884-1919; Davis Professor of Elocution at Newton Theological Institution 1884-1919; Instructor in Elocution, Harvard University 1891-94; Harvard University

* Dr. Shailer Mathews, Dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.
** Professor John Wesley Churchill, D.D. who taught at Newton Theological Seminary, Boston University and also at Harvard.

Divinity School 1896-1902; Yale University Divinity School 1892-1902; Union Theological Seminary (Union, New York) 1919-1921. Lecturer at University of Minnesota 1905; University of Chicago 1908; University of Washington 1908, 1910, 1911; Teacher's College, Columbia University 1909. Dr. Curry was granted an honorary Litt.D. by Colby College in 1905.

CHAPTER XII

A PERSONAL LOOK AT THE SCHOOL

Perhaps the best way to capture an intimate glimpse of the Currys would be to take a look (and a very personal one) at their School during those years of its flourishing in the first quarter of the twentieth century. For many readers it may be quite illuminating, diverting and even amusing.

For, in looking back, even those who were a part of it realize that such an institution wholly dedicated to Expression and all its ramifications would have a difficult time indeed to survive in this era of speeded-up tempo. It is as surely gone from the American scene as the horse and buggy, the big Chatauqua tents and the Fourth of July oratorical contests.

That day in September 1914 when I arrived in Boston to matriculate at the School marked the beginning of a very new experience for me and many changes in my hitherto exceedingly protected life..This was a professional school I was now entering and I had never been thrown with so many diversified types of people. But here they all were--crowding the halls and studios of the second floor of the S. S. Pierce Building in Copley Square--all coming for the one purpose of sitting at the feet of the Currys!

As I watched them clustering about, a little rhyme kept going through my mind,

> Doctors, lawyers, business men, teachers
> Great folk, small folk, laymen, preachers--

Over three hundred of them--young and old; men and women; housewives and debutantes; two Catholic sisters eager for the training to take back to

their exclusive girl's school in the middle west (which they felt could be obtained only at Curry); professional men, lawyers and ministers by the score; all intent upon achieving a more effective delivery of speech for "putting their ideas across" or in today's parlance "better communication"; sufferers from defective speech handicaps; stammerers, all receiving aid and sometimes cures.

For me it was all a strange atmosphere from the time I alighted at South Station, encountering the acrid, billowing smoke hanging over everything and seeping through the cracks yet I loved Boston almost at once.

But, having come from a very carefully conducted southern college, I must say I was quite taken aback when I realized that the School consisted of only some floors of the Pierce Building, also that there was no campus. With a wave of nostalgia I thought of my beautiful Belmont College* in Nashville, Tennessee with it white-pillared, ante-bellum southern mansion-type of buildings and spacious grounds landscaped in the manner of the gardens of the palace at Versailles.

Since there were no dormitories, living quarters for the students were carefully screened by the School authorities, and usually located in the Back Bay area. I was especially fortunate in being assigned to an old brick house, the home of charming Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Fletcher, whose daughter attended the School, and who promptly acted as foster parents to the other four students (all from the southern states) who were living under their roof.**

I was amazed at the freedom allowed even in a professional school. We were much on our own, able to choose our own pace and our own hours for studying. We worked in a relaxed atmosphere even dancing informally during the fifteen minute periods between classes, and it was fun although I too shared somewhat the

*When Belmont College combined with Ward Seminary, also a Nashville school for young ladies, it became known as Ward-Belmont. It now, however continues as Belmont College.

**The quintet consisted of Frances Friel from Kentucky (who became Mrs. Paul R. Chandler, now deceased), Lucile Green from Alabama (deceased), Grace Ruble from Mississippi (who became Mrs. R. H. Harmon), Ethel Fletcher (their daughter) and the writer - Lenice Ingram from Tennessee (who became Mrs. Frederick Bacon.)

feeling expressed by another student,* "All the time I was at the School I felt a sense of mystery--I sometimes wondered if I had fallen into a den of necromancers--their language appeared so metaphysical in nature. But it was delightful."*

At the desk where we registered, I was surprised to be met by Mrs. Curry herself although I did not realize at first that this wise, deft lady helping us work out our schedules was the wife of the President and Dean of the School. I just supposed that here was someone employed for such a purpose. Had I known I might not have been so courageous in stating what I wished and did not wish to do. Perhaps this was why I never really felt afraid of Mrs. Curry even when I came in for my share of some pretty harsh criticism.

I well recall my first attempt at reading a Browning selection before the class. I had chosed The Patriot

"It was roses, roses all the way
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad;
The housetops seemed to heave and sway
The church spires flamed, such flags they had
A year ago on this very day."

Then the disillusionment, and utter disenchantment

"There's nobody on the house-tops now--
Just a palsied few at the window set.....

I go in the rain and more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds."

And, the ending,

"Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumph people have dropped down dead.
'Paid by the world, what doest thou owe
Me? --God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay; I am safer so."

*Letter from Domis E. Plugge (T.D.'22) teacher and actor whose stage name was Daniel Poole.

I rendered it with all that was in me--perhaps that was the trouble. Anyway it was borne in upon me that I was not ready for the Patriot. Mrs. Curry firmly asked me to sit down, saying that I should try it after I had "lived more."

I recall with respect and affection, my Boston teachers, each so individualistic--prim and proper Miss Hughes in Interpretation of Great Literature; kindly but dowager-like Mrs. Mason (sometimes called "Mother Mason") in Dramatic Interpretation, her deep voice resounding from a well-developed bosom which she liked to refer to as "my expansion"; Mrs. Kempton in Coordination of Voice and Body who talked about "finding your range" (in voice of course); Mrs. Harwood, (former pupil of Baron Nils Posse) who taught Gymnastics and Dancing, her claquers echoing through the halls as she brought some rhythic movement to a pause with a jolt; Mrs. Evans, magnetic, compelling teacher whose lessons in Coordination of Mind, Voice and Body helped in the development of our "souls"*

But I did not find an instructor in Boston who could surpass our own Pauline Sherwood Townsend at Belmont, head of the Dramatic and Speech Department, who was responsible for my coming to the School in the first place. Miss Townsend was one of Curry's outstanding graduates, nationally known for her skill in pageantry, and, true graduate that she was urged her pupils, after leaving Belmont to go to Boston to continue their study at the source, "The Font of Knowledge."

So it was that I and other Belmont classmates** came to Curry. We were already quite thoroughly indoctrinated in Curry principles, entirely familiar with the language which might "appear metaphysical"*** to outsiders. We knew well the basic Curry formulae. We understood all about "From within outward";

*Letter from Florence Cunningham (G.C. '15)

**Among them Ruth E. Davidson of Helena, Arkansas, (P.R.D.'15)(Org. Gym.Certif '15.)
Martha M. McKnight of Helena, Arkansas, (P.R.D. '15)
Grace Ruble of Hattiesburg, Miss. (G.C. '15) now Mrs. R. H. Harmon

***Letter from Domis Plugge (T.D. '22)

"Impression must precede and determine expression." We knew what was meant by "central breathing," "pitch" "range," and "inflection."

Since I was from Tennessee, Dr. Curry's native state, I was sometimes asked if that was why I had come to Curry--had I been drawn by an instinctive affinity? Actually that had nothing to do with it. I was not aware of his birthplace until after I had become his pupil.

As a matter of fact, I came blithely to the Boston School. I fear I did not take it as seriously as my talented roommate and sorority sister * who was intent upon making a career for herself as a public reader. For me it was a kind of adventure and I must say I was not disappointed.

Boston has always been rich and generous in offering cultural advantages to students. Just to walk across the street from the School and become acquainted with the treasures of the Public Library was exciting--to make friends with the stone lions flanking the great marble stairway, to view the Abbey and Sargent murals to say nothing of the priceless volumes in the bewildering maze of stacks. We, at the School felt it was our Library and we were as proud as the Currys themselves when the Library officials would say that "the School of Expression students use the facilities more than any other one group."**

We were encouraged to take walks through the city, "soaking up impressions," seeking any experience which would be enriching or make us more aware of all that was about us, whether it might be the cries of the fish vendors or talking with the little old lady on a side street who sold bunches of sweet lavender and catnip.

We loved expecially to attend the Copley Square churches, knowing of Dr. Curry's close friendships with the two ministers, Bishop Phillips Brooks

* Grace Ruble of Hattiesburg, Miss. (Mrs. R. H. Harmon) (G.C. '15).
** Waverly Magazine, May 1909. A UNIQUE INSTITUTION, published by Waverly Magazine Company, Boston, Mass.

and Dr. GeorgeA. Gordon. We never tired of the Art Museum and the very sight of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Venetian Palace thrilled us. And, somehow again, because of Dr. Curry's friendship with Mrs. Gardner and because she sometimes visited our School, we felt a kind of special bond with famous "Mrs. Jack."

We loved the Common, the Public Gardens and the never-changing, never-modernized swan boats, giving a certain sense of stability in a changing world. As it has been said many times..."In any city but Boston, the swan boats would have been motorized long ago."

1914-15 was that year during World War I when we in this country were holding our breath trusting that it would not involve us. But there were menacing omens. For one thing, Opera in Boston had been discontinued since so many involved in producing it were foreign-connected so, although Boston at that time had a beautiful and gracious Opera House of its own, the building was being used for other types of entertainment such as concerts and dramatic productions.

So, we were in luck. As students of a Dramatic School, we were able to sit in the third balcony and view Shakespearean plays for twenty-five cents to a half dollar and at that price we felt we could attend several performances in order to study them very carefully.

There were many delightful forms of entertainment outside our School interests, theatre, football games and dances--never a dull moment! While the Sheraton Plaza still holds it place of dignity on the site of the old Museum of Fine Arts in our time, it was the "new Copley Plaza" the "hot spot" of the Square, although that term would not have been tolerated then. Impressive and lush in any era, it was sometimes referred to as the "Costly

Pleasure" by our "dates" who could stretch their allowances to include the popular Thés dansants featured there--a form of entertainment made famous by Vernon and Irene Castle. Graceful dancers who clung to the "respectable" form of the dance, holding the fort against the encroachment of such as the "Turkey Trot" and the "Bunny Hug" although they did yield enough to embrace the "Fox Trot and to invent the "Castle Walk."!

At the School dances however, we were still restricted to the more conventional dances.

There was a breath of scandal floating about or at least a persistent rumor that a certain young lady was addicted to cigarettes. Mrs. Curry preferred to ignore the matter and certainly there was no smoking within the Studios.

From the earliest days of the Curry's part in the progressive movement of the Spoken Word, the Recitals at the School were an important feature of the training, when students had the opportunity, in fact were required to appear on the platform as Readers. And when one says "Readers" this is a gross misnomer. It did not imply reading at all. We were required to deliver our selections without aid of script. Papers, notes or properties were strictly forbidden and this does not mean that they were given from memory. Memorizing had no part in our training. We assimilated, which means that the message we were about to impart had become such a part of us through thought and feeling that it could be expressed freely without even a prompter in the wings. One might be fearful of "forgetting" but if it had been truly assimilated, the thought would reassert itself in the mind of the performer. Such was the theory and strangely enough it worked.

Florence Cunningham* however, tells of an instance when it almost didn't

*Letter from Florence Cunningham (G.C. '15)

work. "I was attending a recital--my first--and some girl was giving a reading. Suddenly she stopped, forgetting what came next. No prompter came to the rescue. The audience, at first sympathetic, grew restless, then tittered. I was frantic. Indignant, I started to go for a prompter. The silence went on for several minutes and finally the girl remembered and continued the reading and the audience applauded."

A professional atmosphere pervaded the Recitals. Ushers in long evening gowns handed out the formal, printed programs not only to interested friends of the performers but to proper Bostonians, (including Mrs. Jack Gardner) all coming to enjoy an evening of good entertainment. Boston newspapers reported School events as important and cultural occasions and we find among the guest lists such names as Nathan Haskell Dole, Rev. and Mrs. Paul Revere Frothingham, Mr. and Mrs. James J. Storrow, Miss Lucy Peabody, Dr. and Mrs. William Warren, Miss Elizabeth Curtis, Mr. A. E. Winship, the Reverend Woodman Bradbury.

In spite of Mrs. Curry's unequaled ability as both teacher and interpretive reader, and we all had to recognize that it was Dr. Curry who spurred the imagination. On the days when he was to appear, it was as if a great prima donna was about to arrive. Excited anticipation filled the rooms, all classes assembled together, eager not to miss a word, a gesture. And we were never disappointed.

Truly it was not only a great philosopher and dedicated teacher, but a natural-born actor who walked the boards--even his stance unmistakably suggesting the character he assumed, lived, in fact. His great shock of white hair, his long beard, his tall magnificent bearing, the leonine head--all unforgettable, whether he was for the moment Hamlet, MacBeth or MacBeth's lady; whether it was a Biblical interpretation, Elijah at Mount Carmel, or the Prodigal son's return home; or it could be the lightness of Pippa's passing or the tripping of Titania. We were all transported.

Dr. Curry's sense of humor was easily brought into play. One student* recalls "Dr. Curry often charmed us with impromptu profiles of Boston celebrities. A special delight was to see him do Amy Lowell, the poet, striding back and forth, chomping on her cigar." Dr. Curry was a "prophet" far beyond his time. His great hope was that correct speech training might become a required part of all our educational institutions. And it's interesting to read a recent statement by General Thomas White, Chief of Staff of our Air Force, "Speech training should be a 'must' in the American college or University curriculum, if we are to realize the full potential of American brain power." And Major General Briggs of the Army stated just what Dr. Curry so often said, "It doesn't do much good to have excellent ideas if you can't get them across to others."

Many years after I had been a pupil at the School, I was attending a luncheon in Boston, given in honor of some of the current Metropolitan Opera stars. I had gone especially because of Eleanor Steber whose magnificent voice had carried her to success straight from our own Eliot Church quartette in Newton, Massachusetts.

After the luncheon, the guests of honor were asked to speak and one by one, including Steber, told with a degree of excitement about the important methods of training that were being applied to operatic work; how they had got away from the old artificial gesturing, the stiff posturing, singers declaiming in song, seemingly unrelated to the whole. Now they said they had been made aware of the "coordination of thought and feeling" with the action spontaneous and natural, resulting in a "oneness and harmony."

With me was a friend who also had had the experience of Curry training. We looked at each other, astonished. Could it be possible that those who directed and trained the great Metropolitan Company were just realizing those basic truths that had been drilled into us at the School of Expression day after day?

*Annie Maude Wilbur (G. C. '18) now Mrs. Arthur Ives Brown, Jr. of Newton, Mass.

Later I consulted my freshman notebook and found just such notes, "Oneness is a feeling of the body as a whole--a thinking in the body--leading to expression--a harmony of action--the liberation of restrictions--self-consciousness--enabling the body to express the spiritual experience..."

Such was the training and the atmosphere permeating those second floor rooms of the old Pierce Building that we could not fail to recognize a challenge,* educational and cultural, far removed from the "finishing-school" type or the artificiality of many methods of teaching Speech still in vogue. It was that "something different."

His pupils understood fully what Dr. Curry meant when he said "Anyone who looks at these humble rooms (much as we love them) as the Institution, makes a great mistake. The greatest endowment of the School of Expression can never be localized. It is the fidelity to principles of those it has trained in all parts of the world."

We shared in his pride when he expressed the same thought in the dedication of one of his last books written.** "To all those who by loyal thought, word or deed have founded the School of Expression."

*After my exposure to "that something different" I too was eager to impart to others what I had found and upon my return to Tennessee it was a satisfying experience to give private instruction to a group of thirty teen-agers who in turn were eager to express themselves effectively.

**THE SMILE, published by the Expression Company, Boston 1915.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COPLEY SQUARE ERA COMES TO AN END

In this day of material values as in the days when Isaiah spake, prophets are a bit out of style and apt to be looked upon with askance. Yet no one can doubt, for a moment the enduring quality of their dreams.

Samuel Silas Curry fulfilled Mr. Noah Webster's definition of a prophet,* "One gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight; an effective spokesman for a cause, a doctrine; a spiritual seer." Also he fulfilled Isaiah's prediction** "Whether they shall hear or whether they will forbear, yet shall they know there hath been a prophet among them."

Followers of Dr. Curry expressed somewhat the same thought in other words, "It is not within the opportunity of the living to appreciate Dr. Curry. It will take ages to accomplish this man's thought. Fortunately he will have left behind, for the digestion of time, books, outcroppings of himself and his toil in his method of communication with his fellow-creatures." ***

"Dr. Curry will some day be recognized as an educational philosopher having championed principles no less true of the spoken word than of every form of creative expression...."****

At the time of Dr. Curry's death, Boston newspapers proclaimed him "The greatest living teacher of voice and pantomime, stating "Dr. Curry

*Webster's International Dictionary.

**From the Bible Isaiah, Chapter 2 Verse 5.

***The School of Expression and Curry by J. M. Leveque, Editor of Harlequin Magazine, New Orleans, La. Published by Expression Co. Boston.

**** Dr. Shailer Mathews, Dean of Divinity School of University of Chicago in an article S. S. Curry in the World of Today Feb. 1908

crystalized into permanent form, many theories of Art for the student of today."

Fortunately Dr. Curry was able to continue his many activities up until his passing. He conducted classes as usual only three days before with "his accustomed vigor and poise."

Yet, in looking back upon his letters, there are evidences that he was wearying. And he had expressed disappointment that there was"so much work unfinished."

It had been in 1902 that he wrote "I leave Harvard and Yale to devote myself more fully to the School--its methods, its books and endowment."* And while he had written and published at least fourteen volumes there were many more burning in his mind, waiting to be brought into being.

In a letter to his son** dated August 18, 1918, he said "One cause of discouragement is my books--all that I can leave, and many of them are not finished. I have not been able to find time or strength to give them the finishing touches."

In the same letter there was expressed the life-long love of nature so strong within him, "I should like to try to find some little farm where I could go and get into the woods where I could stroll easily around and lie down on the grass...you know the power to play is just as important as work..!

He continued to work however, and there was still surprising virility and the penetrating eyes appeared undimmed. The writer's last impression of Dr. Curry in 1920 while visiting in Boston, was a never-to-be-forgotten one. There were the same expressive and powerful movements of hands and body; the quick turn of the leonine head; the same intense emotion, indicative of the depth and force of the man as he restlessly paced the floor of his study in the old building in Copley Square, repeating the word "service" over and over -- almost losing himself in the thought "service--the true meaning and aim of all life."

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*Early School Records

**Letter written to his son Haskell Brooks Curry who was then a student at Harvard University.

There was also a poignant sadness which was communicable--sadness that he had not succeeded in establishing the kind of permanency for the future of the School for which he had longed and worked so many years--"worked without salary" using only the income from his lecturing, his writing and from private instruction. He recognized that he was not a business man, and was able to foresee that the small Endowment Fund would be far from adequate in the difficult period which would follow his passing.

His letter of August 18th to his son* ended with a poignant note, "It is hard for me to rest as I once did."

Rest came to ~~me~~ on the day before Christmas, Saturday, December 24, 1921. and Samuel Silas Curry passed away peacefully at his home on Bay State Road.

"From the time of his death to the following Wednesday, December 28th when the funeral service was held, a steady stream of visitors of all classes, nationalities and beliefs, called to express their grief and love and to look for the last time upon his kind, old face. The service itself was conducted throughout by old friends at the home of the family."**

The honorary pall-bearers were: Dr. Stanley Durkee; J. Carter Walker; Rev. Pitt Dillingham; W. B. Closson; James M. Head; Binney Gunnison; Malcolm Green and Willard P. Lombard. Six of these served as trustees of the School of Expression***

Many were the tributes to honor Dr. Curry. Boston newspapers reported in detail, "Clergymen, educators, alumni, students and friends in many cities and towns throughout the country as well as in Canada, are uniting in National Memorial Services to be conducted simultaneously with the Boston Service, Feb. 16, 1922."

*Haskell Brooks Curry, then a student at Harvard University.

**Special Memorial Supplement of Expression Vol. XXIX No. 3 Official Organ of the School. Published January, 1922.

***Of these six trustees, only one is living, Willard Price Lombard, L.L.B., D.Sc.O., Boston Lawyer, who has served the Curry institutions consecutively from 1916 to the present time. Dr. Lombard studied under both Dr. and Mrs. Curry, becoming a member of the Board of Trustees of the School of Expression during their lifetime. Since that time he has continued as a trustee through difficult transitional periods, playing an important role in establishing and molding the present Curry College. From 1963 to 1968 he served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the Corporation of Curry College and is still an active memeber of the Board.

Announcement in the Saturday Evening edition of the Boston Transcript, "Final plans for the National Memorial Service to the late Dr. Samuel Silas Curry, educator and Founder and President of the School of Expression, have been completed and the Boston Memorial will take place next Thursday afternoon at 4 p.m., New Old South Church in Copley Square within a block of the School where Dr. Curry taught for so many years.

"Dr. Charles W. Eliot, president-emeritus of Harvard College will be the principal speaker. He will talk on Dr. Curry's aims in education. Other speakers will be Dr. Stanley Durkee, president of Howard University, Washington, a graduate of the School of Expression; Rev. Samuel M. Lindsay, a former student who has recently been called from New York to Beacon Street Baptist Church; H. Addington Bruce, noted Cambridge psychologist, will give an appreciation of the work of Dr. Curry.

"Nixon Waterman, a long-time friend, has dedicated a poem to Dr. Curry which will be read; H. L. Hartz, the composer, has just finished the music for one of Dr. Curry's poems which will be sung by Mr. Sheldon Holcomb, baritone, while John Orth, the composer and musician, will play selections composed especially for Dr. Curry's funeral service. Dr. George A. Gordon, Pastor of Old South Church will give the benediction.

"There will be representative of various clubs of which Dr. Curry was a member including the Twentieth Century Club, the Art Club, the Boston Author's Club, the Browning Club and the Puddingstone Club. There will be delegations from the various universities and seminaries where Dr. Curry has taught, including Yale, Harvard, Boston University, Columbia, Newton Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary and a number of others."*

On Founder's Day, November twenty-third (Dr. Curry's natal day) ceremonies appropriate to the occasion were held in Irving Studio. Unfortunately Mrs. Curry was not able to attend but sent the following note to the Trustees and to the Alumni: "I am not able to be with you at the

*Boston Evening Transcript Feb. 11, 1922.

Founder's Day Exercises. However, I enclose prayers that I would be glad to have read."

Mrs. Curry survived her husband only a few years. During that time however, she served as Dean Emeritus of the School of Expression, also taking a prominent part in the National Educational Association.

"On February 22, 1924, Anna Baright Curry, too, found rest and was lain beside her husband and children,* Edith Dean Curry and Presnell Baright Curry in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Since then the Trustees (of the School) have been in charge of a mighty work left unfinished."**

There was indeed a "mighty work unfinished" and it was left to others to pick up the business of holding the School together. It was Dr. Samuel M. Lindsay who came forward and "for friendship's sake and love of Dr. Curry*** served as the second President of the School of Expression 1922-1923, carrying the School through that year of crisis, "working hard to prevent the School from going out of existence."****

Through the years that followed it took many hands and stout hearts to carry the load--much sacrifice and unswerving faith to keep it going. Many names of those who made their contributions come to mind and to name only a few, there stands out, Miss. E. V. McQuarrie, faithful secretary who had served both Dr. and Mrs. Curry and who stayed at her post; Miss Mary Catherine McDonough, devoted Assistant to Mrs. Curry; Dr. Binney Gunnison, loyal follower of Dr. Curry who served as Dean of the School after Mrs. Curry's death; J. Stanley Durkee, old friend of Dr. Curry; Trentwell Mason White; lovely Imogene Andre who succeeded Dr. Gunnison as Dean after his retirement; Dr. Donald Wilson Miller under whose regime the institution acquired the status of Curry College and whose foresight made possible the move from Commonwealth Avenue to the beautiful Milton site; Dr. Howard Douglass Wood who served well until the coming of dynamic Dr. John Stuart Hafer. Loyal alumni poured their help into the School; trustees such as Dr. Kirtley Mather,

*Children surviving Dr. and Mrs. Curry are Mabel Campbell (Curry) Galassi and Haskell Brooks Curry

**From letter written in 1925 by Mrs. Charles Duncan Craigie, formerly Helen Dean Baright, sister of Anna Baright Curry.

***Samuel M. Lindsay letter 1965

****Ibid

renowned geologist of Harvard University, who served on the Board for forty-two years; Dr. Willard P. Lombard, prominent Boston Lawyer; Dr. Joseph A. Doherty and Dr. Mildred Flagg, noted educators, all of whom gave unsparingly of themselves and their time.

Now, we rejoice in Curry's triumph--proud of Curry's ability to overcome. The road has been long.

Back in May 1901, Dr. E. Huntington* second President of Boston University paid tribute to Dr. Curry, "Old friend and colleague at Boston University, I congratulate you and your wonderful partner upon your success..guided through the years of adversity to this date with such triumph...your boundless enthusiasm for your work carrying you through evil and through good--through winter and summer...Let me add a word as to the solidarity of education....rooted in one great fundamental idea, and that idea, Dr. Curry you have stood for in teaching--that expression must spring from character, there must be something to express before you have have expression. There must be character and soul."

*Dr. E. Huntington, President Boston University 1904-1911. From an address given at the alumni banquet of School of Expression, May 1, 1901.

In Memory of Dr. Curry

He preached the "Sermon On The Mount":
I closed my eyes, and thought I heard the Christ,-
An older Christ who was not crucified,
but grown to fine old age, with still a flash of fire
in his eyes.
Tall and erect he stood as mountain pine
that stands alone against the glowing sky.
His sermon done, I wished him "Merry Christmas."
"Such is for you," he said, "for I shall climb
to yonder mountain top, to be alone with God,
and rest awhile."..
As Christmas dawn was red above the hills,
One stalwart pine stood out against the sky
I heard bells chime across the sparkling snow,
But one I knew was deaf to pomp and show,
For he had climbed to find his rest on high.

Marjorie Somers Scheuer

Note: Marjorie Somers Scheuer (Mrs. Jerome Scheuer) a former student at the School of Expression 1919-1922, a poet of note, wrote the poem In Memory of Dr. Curry having heard him deliver a sermon only a short time before his death.

TO THE CORPORATION AND TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOOL OF EXPRESSION

May 16, 1921

Dear Friends:

I leave this as a part of my last Will. Please accept the assurance of my gratitude for your kindness and for the sacrifices you have made for the School of Expression.

I bequeath to you its ideals, its methods, its plans, its future, hoping that you may secure as the head of it one who will be wiser than I have been, and with more tact to approach men of influence, and a better manager to arrange its great future.

I have labored very hard on its methods, and to lay broad foundations to make it worthy of the confidence and cooperation of great universities, and higher class of educational institutions.

It has not been managed for mere commercial gain, and every sacrifice has been made to give it the highest standard, and to secure for it the truest methods and to lead it along lines of the deepest scientific and artistic investigation.

I hope you will do everything you can to keep the School from being managed on a commercial basis. See that everyone that is connected with the institution is placed upon a fixed salary. We have been compelled to manage the best we could in the early days of the School, and I had to give my services for over 30 years without income, except from that received by working in the summer and outside institutions, to make a living, but this is not wise, and I should not have done it. It would have been better if I had paid so much income, as I did on the books at one time, as much as $2500, for deficits, as it is impossible to find anyone to do what I have done for the School.

With assurance of love and gratitude for all your loving kindness, I am

Very sincerely yours,
(signed) S. S. Curry

BOOKS BY DR. CURRY

CLASSICS FOR VOCAL EXPRESSION	1888
THE PROVINCE OF EXPRESSION	1891
LESSONS IN VOCAL EXPRESSION	1895
IMAGINATION AND DRAMATIC INSTINCT	1896
VOCAL AND LITERARY INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE	1903
ALEXANDER MELVILLE BELL Some Memories with Fragments from a Pupil's Notebook	1906
FOUNDATIONS OF EXPRESSION	1907
BROWNING AND THE DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE	1908
MIND AND VOICE Principles and Methods in Vocal Training	1910
LITTLE CLASSICS FOR ORAL ENGLISH	1912
SPOKEN ENGLISH	1913
THE SMILE	1915
HOW TO ADD TEN YEARS TO YOUR LIFE	1915
HINTS TO OFFICERS ON THE VOICE ON GIVING COMMANDS	1918
POEMS	1922

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LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF CURRY COLLEGE

Samuel Silas Curry, Ph.D., Litt.D.	1879-1921
Samuel Macaulay Lindsay, D.D.	1921-1922
John Kennedy Lacock, A.M.	1922-1923
J. Stanley Durkee, Ph.D., D.D.	1923-1926
Robert Watson, A.M., Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.	1926-1930
J. Stanley Durkee, Ph.D., D.D.	1930-1932
Cornelius A. Parker, LL.B.	1932-1936
Trentwell Mason White, A.M., L.H.D.	1936-1941
Donald Wilson Miller, S.B., A.M., Ed.D., D.Sc.O., L.H.D.	1941-1963
Howard Douglass Wood, A.B., A.M., Ph.D.	1963-1965
John Stuart Hafer, B.S., M.A., Ed.D.	1965-